

May the Lord be with You – A Mileven AU by netflixandnaps

Series: [May the Lord be with You \[1\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Lumax, Mileven

Language: English

Characters: Dr. Brenner, Dustin Henderson, Jane “Eleven” Hopper, Jim Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Lucas Sinclair & Max Mayfeild, Mike Wheeler & Eleven Hopper, Mike Wheeler & Jane “Eleven” Hopper, Mike Wheeler/Lucas Sinclair/Dustin Henderson, Will Byers/Eleven Hopper/Max Mayfeild, Will Byers/Eleven | Jane Hopper/Dustin Henderson/Maxine Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-04-14

Updated: 2018-04-30

Packaged: 2022-04-22 04:43:00

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 11

Words: 24,449

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Mike knows the rules, and he knows the fine line between angels and demons. Heaven is the place where peace is made, where God creates angels to watch over and protect the mortal world. Hell is the place where chaos erupts, demons spawning from every fiery corner to tear down the human race. So why is it that when a black eyed satanist shows up at the gates of heaven with her little devilish friends that he can't loose interest in her? There's something about the way she moves, something about the way she smiled demonically, something about the way she makes him feel. She isn't like any other demons he's ever met. But he knows she's dangerous. Every second they spend together is just another step towards his grave that he's digging for himself.

1. Playlist

1. **Angel** - Aerosmith
2. **Send Me an Angel** - Scorpions
3. **Demons** - Imagine Dragons
4. **Take Me to Church** - Hozier
5. **Wake Me Up** - Avicii
6. **Strange Love** - Halsey
7. **I'm So Sorry** - Imagine Dragons
8. **I Don't Wanna Live Forever** - ZAYN, Taylor Swift
9. **Little Lion Man** - Mumford and Sons
10. **Pitchfork Kids** - AJR
11. **Dancing In The Dark** - Imagine Dragons
12. **Immortals** - Fall Out Boy
13. **YOUTH** - Troye Sivan
14. **Dream On** - Aerosmith

Click [here](#) to listen to it on Spotify

2. Chapter 2

Mike had never seen a demon in the flesh. He was past five thousand years old, and he had never seen a demon. Until now. He was told that they were hideous, foul creatures with bottomless pits for eyes, teeth rotting at the edges of they're cracking lips, releasing an atrocious gas from the depths of their throats, and scrappy, thin hair falling out from their dried-out scalps, but this girl was anything but that. She was beautiful. She had curious brown eyes covered up by her curling chocolate hair that fell just short of her shoulders. Modest curves made her stand out, but also stay concealed, and a short spray of freckles dusted her face like a painter had flicked the end of a brush tipped off with brown paint towards her cheeks. She wore black clothes; a black cotton crop top and black ripped jeans, but a multi-colored flannel that was several sizes too big lay upon her shoulders. Black eyeliner surrounded her eyes and her neck was framed with two black chokers, as well as a blue knit hair tie that was around her wrist. She was breathtaking. Mike let out a desperate exhale, causing the girl and the boy next to her turned and look at him, the red head chuckling diabolically next to the mysterious girl. He replicated her so closely, they could be twins. Mike felt his heart boom, but then sink as he watched her smirk at him, her eyes filling into black pits.

"Mike!" A voice boomed from behind him, followed by a rush of warm air. Dustin and Lucas landed behind him, skidding to a stop inched before plowing right into the demon team.

"Holy shit!" Dustin exclaimed, his nose inches away from the boy's locks. The curly haired child of god looked curiously as the boy, but instantly fled to hide behind Mike when the demon rolled his eyes, flipping away his long locks and allowing his eyes to reveal his true form.

"Demons," Lucas hissed, spitting at them. The redhead laughed bitterly, slapping the gorgeous leader before getting her arms ripped backwards, the angel holding her pulling tighter on his reins. "What's so funny?" Lucas challenged, sneering at her.

"Nothing," she simply replied, sharing a smirk with the other girl.

"You're superior just asked you a question," Dustin spat.

"My sthuperior isth justh another sthtupid angel!" she howled, mocking Dustin's inevitable lisp.

The angels hands clenched into a fist, his feet pawing at the white stone path that led to the Almighty Allfather. "Don't make me kick your ass," he warned in a low tone.

"Now I'm really scared," she laughed, the two brunettes joining her. Mike's heart practically stopped. Her laugh was so beautiful, so light and full of hope. Or maybe it wasn't hope, since Mike was pretty sure that demons were heartless. Maybe it was rage flowered and hidden in a joyous sound.

"Dustin," Mike said softly, resting a hand on his friends back, "it's fine. She's just messing with your head."

"Hell yeah I am. Toothless over here needs to get a grip!"

That was it. Dustin ripped himself away from Mike's light grip, charging at the demon. He placed his hand on her head, teeth clenched against one another as she screamed, her whole body falling limp as he tortured the demon within her.

"Stop!" she shrieked, her cries echoing the fair valley, "Stop! Stop it! Make it stop!"

Thinking quickly, Lucas placed a hand to the ground, closing his eyes and within seconds, everyone standing was laying on the group, wings bent everywhere while the demons lay together, their eyes freshly black and all staring at the red head, who had an angelic marking on her forehead. A brand.

"That'll be enough!" he boomed, glaring at everyone, especially Dustin who was sheepishly walking back. Lucas smacked him on the side of his head. Turning to address the remaining angels, he spoke, "Now, hand the prisoners over to me and Mike. We will take them to the Allfather, who will decide their fate."

"No need," a voice whispered from a few feet away. "Here comes an archangel. We're all screwed."

Bowing before their superior, the angel fell to their knees, the demons cowering together and holding the lifeless red headed demon to their chest cradling her.

"I am Gabriel," he commanded, his voice silencing every sound that may have whispered and flown with the wind. "Archangel and son of God. Welcome to the afterlife," he spoke, respect not wavering in his voice even as he spoke to the demons. "We will make you comfortable here." A few protests erupted from the angels surrounding their black eyed enemies, but he silenced them with the raise of his hands. "Michael, Lucas, and Dustin will escort you to your chambers. There, you will be stripped of your powers and taught on

how to live our way. Now, I know this isn't the typical way of God, but we must all trust our Lord." And with a beam of light ascending up to the floating kingdom above, Gabriel disappeared.

The three boys stood up, rolling their eyes and grasping the arms of their prisoners firmly. Lucas made a beeline for the red-head and Dustin wanted nothing to do with the beautiful girl, so Mike nervously took her arm.

"You might want to hold on tight," Lucas suggested, a smirk layer upon his lips.

"Uh-huh, and whys that princess?" she sneered, spitting at him.

"Because it's going to be a rocky flight if you don't."

The demon screaming, the angels parted from the ground, flapping their wings as they ascended and flew over the promised lands. The girl clutching Mike's arms just laughed.

"What's so funny?" he questioned, trying not to smile at her. She did have a beautiful laugh.

"Max thinks she's so tough until a bunch of stuck-up angels lift her up off the ground."

"Max. The red-head?"

"Oh yeah. She's a little bit much, don't you think?"

"She wouldn't be my first choice," Mike considered.

"So let me guess, your the angel Michael, right? Dustin or Lucas doesn't really fit you."

"Yeah. I'm Mike."

"Elle," she said, inhaling the sweet air, "and the curly dipshit is carrying my brother, Will." She was silent for a second, before stating in disgust, "Damn, your air up here tastes like happiness and hope. It's gross."

Mike laughed, smiling at the girl. And to his luck, she was smiling back.

Dustin slammed the door on the cells, the ivy retracting back over the lock so he could close it with a key. Mike and Lucas were sitting on the stone wall, watching smugly as their friend struggled to shut the door.

"Need any help there, Dustin?" Lucas joked, elbowing Mike. "You might want to ask Elle or Will over there if they could help you."

"Ha ha assholes," he replied gruffly, rolling his eyes before sending

his concentration back to the lock. It finally clicked shut.

“Um, hey assholes,” Max yelled, annoyance layering her voice, “I thought we were going to be treated like angels up here.”

“You are,” Lucas grinned, standing up and approaching the girl, who had pressed herself up against the cell door.

“So why are we in this hellhole?”

“Because we’ve got to get rid of those nasty demon powers.”

“Bitches,” Max hissed, lunging for the boy, but Will held her back, pulling her into a small hug to try to calm her down.

Lucas smirked, but Mike could see that there was something else there. Lust, maybe? Max was beautiful. She had long, wavy red hair that fell short of her hips, but it was pulled back into a small, loose ponytail, streaks of purple running like deer in a meadow through the tangly mess. She had the brightest blue eyes any of the angels had ever seen; they were like clear water pools, so clean and beautiful you could see your own reflection. She had a light dusting of freckles over her pale skin, that seemed to radiate in heaven's light. She wore a leather jacket over a ripped band t-shirt, advertising a bunch of old dead guys in way too much makeup. She had fishnet leggings underneath her black, denim shorts and combat boots tied tightly around her ankles. A bunch of woven bracelets lined her wrists and a choker lay around her neck.

Nodding to Dustin, the two boys watched as he brought his nose to a honeysuckle, unlocking a panel of buttons that would activate the devil's snare lining the walls of the prison. He gently pressed each snare, watching as the demons grimaced, and then got angry, lunging for the angels but they couldn't step over what was carved into the marble. They were stuck.

“Lucas, would you like to do the honors?” Dustin asked curiously, skipping back around to where his friends were.

“With pleasure.”

The tall boy stepped up, raising his hand to the demons. He closed his eyes, summoning the power from within him. Within seconds, the hell children fell to their knees, grasping at their necks like something was strangling them. Their shrieks echoed in heaven's paradise, the shrill sound burning at the angels ears. Will was the first one to collapse, his body falling limp.

“Will!” Elle screamed. Relentlessly, she tried to use her power against the three angels, but it was no use. The devil's snare had her.

Max fell over next, her body suddenly crumbling as the dark pools

that had taken over her beautiful eyes smoked away. She went limp, landing on Elle's lap.

"Max!" she screamed, shaking the girl. Tears filled her eyes, the black pools falling away. "Bring her back! Bring her back! You cowards, bring her back! Bring them back! Will!"

Mike turned away, the cries ripping at his heart, like a claw was sinking into his flesh. He was an angel. He didn't care who it was, hurting another living thing killed him.

"Enough!" he commanded.

Lucas' focus broke, dropping his hand. The older boy stopped and stared at him, sweat dripping from his hair. Turning his ear slightly over his shoulder, he saw Elle breathing heavily, then grabbing Will, checking his heart beat.

"He's alive," Mike said softly, inching slowly closer to cell. Nodding towards Dustin, he watched the curly head boy confusedly go and release the devil's snare. Elle didn't move. She didn't even notice. "Neither of them are dead. Their powers are drained. And yours are weakened."

She didn't say anything, she just looked at him. Her eyes didn't change and there was no hatred displayed on her face. She looked emotionless.

"You're very strong," Mike continued, unlocking the cell door. She didn't move. "Most demons would've already attacked, pinning me to a wall and ripping my heart from my chest. Terrorizing heaven, and yet, here we are." Silence filled the air.

"I'm not going to kill you," she whispered gently. "You didn't kill Will and Max. You saved me. I'm not going to kill you." Slowly, she raised herself to her feet. Dustin and Lucas came out behind Mike, snarling at her, but he held out a hand to stop them. Elle approached Mike, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. Awkwardly, she wrapped her arms around his waist, pulling herself into him. He felt her fingers shove aside his wings, and then her bringing her nose to his chest, inhaling his scent. Blushing, he put his arms around her, his wings bending around the two of them as a further embrace.

Dustin coughed and the two parted. Mike, his face still flushed, addressed his friends, "Take Will and Max to their chambers, preferably close to one another's. I'll take Elle."

"Of course you will," Dustin teased. Scooping up Will, who lay lifeless in the boy's arms, he pushed his feet from the ground, disappearing instantly.

"Watch yourself, man. She's a demon. She won't bring you any good," Lucas warned, his whispers traveling into Mike's ears. Within seconds, Max and the stern boy disappeared into thin air.

"So he doesn't trust me in the slightest," Elle snorted.

"He doesn't trust anyone in the slightest."

"Does that include his little feathered friends?"

"Most angels he trusts, but as for some..."

"I get it. He's superstitious. And he should be. My powers aren't drained, remember?"

"I know. And that's what I'm here to discuss."

"Ooh, are we going to make a deal," she said sneakily, like a fox stalking its prey. "Making deals with the devil is very risky Mike. One of God's children shouldn't be even associating with us."

"Says the person who literally knocked on heaven's gates."

"Not my finest move."

"No. Not even in the slightest."

Mike sighed, running a hand through his tangly hair. "Walk with me."

"Um, where?"

"Through the gardens. No one will come after you there, I promise."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Stiffly, Elle followed him, tagging at his heels as he led her through the thick gardens, roses and beautiful plants surrounding them.

"It is kind of pretty," she swallowed, loosening her shoulders a bit.

"Yes it is. Everything is in bloom year-round. You don't have to watch something beautiful suffer and die," he said gently, glancing at her. She disgust his eye, giving a small, shaky smile.

"Yeah."

They walked in silence. As they rounded the corner, Mike cautiously grabbed her hand, leading her to the small koi pond, the large fish swimming around in the clear blue water while the lily pads floated atop. Reaching out the a bush that ran up the side of the small, stone waterfall, Mike plucked a daisy and gently tucked it into Elle's hair. He offered a kind smile, and she returned it.

Mike had found out early in his life, even when he was still human, that kindness was rewarded with kindness, and it was far better to show love to a person than hate, even if the person had wronged you. It still amazed him that after centuries, this lesson had stayed with him, reminding him of what he was with every action he performed.

When he was a little boy, his mother had taught him that even people of evil could show love, and that there was more to them than it seemed. He was positive that this was the case with Elle. She had been truly grateful when Mike had saved her brother and her friend, something most demons couldn't even pretend. She had hugged him. Him. An angel. Someone who had just stood by as his companion had tortured her friends. She had smiled and held him hand and smelled the flower he had tucked into her hair. She wasn't evil.

"I'm sorry, you did what?"

Mike, Dustin, and Lucas sat in the willow garden, the tall, beautiful trees swaying in the wind, the moss and leaves flowing like curtains.

"I told her I'd let her roam free. And that Will and Max could do the same," Mike shrugged, staring out at the horizon while the sun set on the kingdom.

"So you mean to tell me," Lucas gritted, "that you're letting three demons wander freely in heaven? Mike, they want to destroy heaven!"

"No, they don't. When Elle and I talked, I made it very clear that if they did anything peculiar of demonic, we'd take them back to the cell and they would be tortured, left to die."

"Damn Mike," Dustin smirked, "are you trying to scare off your girlfriend?"

"Girlfriend?" he questioned, his nose wrinkling up in disgust. "You think I like a demon?"

"Well, you hugged her back pretty hard..."

"He has a point Mike," Lucas chimed in, smugly looking at his friend.

"You never get like that with girls."

"That's preposterous!" Mike argued. "I hug Nancy and Holly all the time!"

"They're your sisters!" Dustin laughed, slapping Mike on the back.

"Just admit it dude, you like a demon."

"Maybe," Mike whispered, looking up shyly at his friends.

"Son of a bitch. Lucas, I didn't think he'd admit it!"

"You're playing with fire," the nervous angel warned. "And we're not going to drag your dumbass back from hell if she turns."

"Well, you like Max!" Mike fired back, crossing his arms.

"Dude, holy shit! You like MadMax?"

“MadMax?”

“Yeah, that’s what I call her. That demon is like, totally crazy. She’s got this weird thing going on with the badass attitude, but like, and 80’s thing, too. It’s like totally tubular,” Dustin joked, high-fiving Mike and laughing while Lucas rolled his eyes.

“At least she’s more stable than Elle. That girl has got issues.”

“Well, we did just torture her brother and best friend...” he said, defending her.

Lucas threw up his hands. “Jeez, Mike. You don’t have to defend her every second!”

“I am not!”

“You kind of are,” Dustin said.

“Are you seriously picking sides, Dustin?”

“Hey,” he defend, throwing up his own hands, “I’m on the side of whomever doesn’t die because of a crush on a demon. I’m on Team Dustin, the team where common sense is, obviously. Having a crush on a demon is just plain dumb.”

“It’s true,” Lucas said, nodding his head.

“You like Max!”

“She’s stable!”

“She’s a demon!”

“And so is Elle! She’s pure evil, Mike! She’s just playing you so she can rip apart paradise. They cause chaos, Mike. It’s what they do!”

“I can’t do this right now,” Mike growled, flapping his wings and disappearing from the willow tree.

3. Chapter 3

A few weeks passed before Elle saw Mike again. Well, at least when she saw him when they were alone. Several times over the past few days, Dustin, Lucas, and Mike had taken the three siblings from their chamber and let them explore heaven with them. Will and Max were a little shy, and a little intimidated. They were hanging out with the people who had almost killed them, who had drained them of their powers. Who had withdrawn the power needed to complete the mission. That's why Mike and Elle were so important to Max. She knew if Mike trusted Elle enough, she could use her strength and power to do this all on her own. Her and Will could just kick back and relax as they watched their sister kick ass.

Lucas and Max walked together, leading the group. Behind them, Dustin walked with Will, where they were accompanied by Dustin's role model, Steve. Steve had been summoned from the very beginning, when God was gaining creating the mortal realm, when Lucifer was still in heaven with the angels. Centuries after Lucifer had been sent back to hell, Dustin was born, and because of his destiny inscribed into his timeline, Steve had been sent to be his guardian angel. Dustin had no father, no siblings, just mother. Steve sympathized the kid, protecting him and being a friend, even though Dustin couldn't see him. But Dustin always believed. It was like the curly haired boy trusted more in the guardian angel watching over him than his mother. And Steve loved him for that. Even now, he watched over Dustin, caring for him and acting like a father figure for the lad. And Will just looked uncomfortable.

Elle and Mike made up the rear. They walked slowly, so slow in fact that when the other rounded the corner, they were five minutes ahead of the two. But Elle could still hear Max's giggles, joking about the two with Lucas. She cracked one about how she would fall for Mike, if Lucas weren't so hot. Elle smirked. Max was an incredible actress. That, and she could practically hear Lucas blushing as he stammered with his next few words. The curly haired girl sighed, smiling up at the clouds lazily drifting overhead.

"You seem happy."

She turned to look at Mike, whose eyes were glued on her, watching every movement. She took his hand, leaning up to him and kissing his cheek. She knew she wasn't supposed to, but she couldn't help

herself. He was irresistible. "I am." Mike smiled, putting his arm around her and bringing her into the nook between his side and arm. They walked around the corner until they reached their pond. Elle gasped excitedly, rushing away from Mike until she was at the edge of the pond. She dropped to her knees, looking in all the crevices for her koi friends. Mike Caked up behind her, wings brushing against her arm. He dropped down next to her.

"There," he said softly, pointing at the mossy rock wall that formed a barrier between land and water at the other edge of the pond. Elle smiled, placing her fingertips delicately into the water. The water hissed, burning at her fingertips but she didn't remove them until the fish swam up.

"Hi guys," she whispered, smiling at the fish. And they smiled back. Mike grinned. She was absolutely adorable. And she was here with him. He couldn't feel any luckier. Nervously, he grabbed for her hand, lacing their fingers together. She didn't even notice. She stared at the fish. Disappointed, Mike sat in silence, pulling away his hand, but then he felt her squeeze his hand, pulling it back into hers. He looked at her, smiling. She offered up a small smile of her own.

"Elle?"

"Yeah?"

"Who were you before?"

All the color drained from her face.

Oh shit Mike thought. I screwed up.

"What?" she asked, her voice raspy.

He knew he shouldn't repeat himself, but now he was curious. Why did the color drain from her face? "Who were you before?"

"I can't tell you."

"Why not?" he huffed. "I told you!"

"You didn't have to!"

"You and I both know that's a lie. You wouldn't have stopped pressing if I hadn't told you!"

"That's unfair! Your life wasn't even that bad."

"Excuse me," Mike said in shock. "Not that bad? I watched my mom die and my sister die and my sister leave me and my dad neglect and my city burn and my life wasn't that bad?"

"No Mike, it really isn't that bad."

"And like your life was worse! What, did you lose the love of your life? What, did someone hurt your feelings?"

"No," she said sharply.

"Well then what was it?" Mike said bitterly, anger reeking in his voice. "Because I'll tell you right now it's not as bad as losing your family. You'll never know what that's like!"

Elle screamed, her eyes shut and head bowed, her hands flying up. Mike sailed through the air, crashing into a tree. Struggling, he tried to move his body, which felt like it had shattered. He couldn't. He jerked his head around, only to find that Elle was standing, her hands stretched out and pinning Mike to a tree.

"Elle," he choked, "let me go."

She didn't. She only growled, her face crumbling up further. Dustin, Lucas, Max, and the other rounded the corner to find them like this, Elle using her demonic gift to torture Mike while he struggled.

"Son of a bitch..." Dustin breathed.

"Let him down!" Lucas commanded.

Elle didn't break her concentration. She pinned Mike further up the tree, his face turning pale and blue. He was dying. She flung a hand at the other three angels, sending the plummeting into the ivy walls. Flicking a finger, the ivy entwined the boy's, wrapping them up until they started coughing.

Will and Max looked at one another, worried. They had only seen her like this once. When the doctors told them there was nothing they could do. The two siblings knew this what was the girl was thinking of.

"Elle!" Will yelled. "Let him down!"

"Ellie, come on! Stay together!" Max screamed.

Will came up in front of her, pulling her into an embrace. And she broke. She dropped her hands and her knees went weak as she fell to the ground, bringing Will with her. He held her tightly, stroking her hair. Max knelt down behind the two, wrapping them in her own arms.

Breaking free from the vines, Dustin, Lucas, and Steve raced to Mike, who was still laying next to the tree, coughing. The helped him to his feet, the boy staggering like he was drunk.

"God damn it, I'm going to kill her!" Lucas yelled, throwing dirty looks at Elle.

"No," Mike whispered hoarsely, shaking his head. "Don't."

"Mike, she almost killed you," Dustin said, his voice layered with confusion.

"Yeah. I mean, come on kid, she had you headlocked against a tree without even touching you. Think how easy it would be for her to

snap your neck!" Steve chimed in.

"Exactly!" Lucas said, agreeing with the other two boys.

Still, Mike shook his head. "Don't. It's not her fault. I shouldn't have pressed. Let's just go."

And with a flap of the four angels' wings, they were gone.

Elle sat curled up in the floor beside her bed, wrapped in a blanket. Max was pacing while Will was sitting next to her, his arm draped over her. She leaned into him, shakily breathing.

"I'm going to fuc—"

"Don't," Elle interrupted.

"Don't!" Max laughed. "Don't? Ellie, he told you you didn't know what it was like to lose family. He has no idea. He's about to lose a lot more than his family..."

"Max..."

"Don't you Max me! I thought this guy liked you!"

"I know," Elle whispered. She thought that he had too.

"I guess he's just another douchebag angel. I'm sorry Ellie."

"It's not your fault," she shrugged. It shouldn't have bothered her as much as it did.

Will kissed her forehead, cuddling her. She inhaled his scent, allowing herself to feel comfort. Everytime Will held her like this, she felt safe. She felt like she was home. He had a very distinct scent. He had had it for his whole life. Maybe it was a twin thing because he said that she smelled distinct to him, too. Whatever the reason, she felt safe and sound when he held her like this. She rubbed her head against his chest lovingly.

"I'm sorry, Elle," Will whispered.

"It's okay."

"I'm going to go twin all over his ass." That got her to laugh.

"Hallelujah!" Max yelled. "She's laughed. The joy has been brought back to this world!" Elle giggled. "Don't stop laughing, Ellie. Will, tickle her!"

"No," she begged, trying to put up her arms, but it was too late. Will was already tickling her. She laughed so hard her stomach hurt and so hard that she snorted, which sent Will and Max into fits. The three laughed, tickling one another to the sound of rain pattering against the leaves of the trees in the orchards below them.

After what seemed like an eternity, Will and Max stopped, the three breathless with warm, rosy cheeks. They curled up on the floor, wrapped in blankets stripped from their beds.

"I'm sorry I messed up the mission," Elle whispered. Deep down, she knew this wouldn't set them back, but she still felt that way. She was supposed to get close to him and she had failed.

"Oh Elle," Will whispered, squeezing her.

"This isn't a setback," Max cooed, hugging her tightly. "Hell, it's not even a problem. We don't even need Mike to complete this. We can do it all on our own."

"How? It's just me because you guys don't even have powers right now."

"But we know how to get them back."

"What! How?"

"Ask Will," Max replied smugly.

"Will?"

The boy blushed. "I may have had to do a few things with one of the angels working in the orchards to get what I needed."

"Willy!" Elle laughed, "I'm ashamed of you! Spill. What do we have to do?"

"All we need to do is go back to the cell where they drained our powers. When we get there, we need to draw our blood into on if the flowers, the blue honeysuckle, chant a small reversal thing in Latin and then it'll reverse everything."

"And he just gave you this information?"

"He may have been a little tipsy..."

That sent Max and Elle into a fit, their laughter louder than the thunder.

"So you pissed off a demon. Well that was just a great idea, wasn't it? Wasn't it! Damn it Mike, she could've killed you!"

"But she didn't..."

"Mike," Steve said with a sigh, "I think you're missing Lucas's point."

"But she didn't kill me! I'm alive!"

"Barely!" Lucas exclaimed, his hand in his hands. "She's dangerous. You should strip her of her powers."

"No, that won't solve anything."

"Um, yeah, it will actually. She won't be able to strangle you

anymore!”

“Yeah, but she’ll still be mad. Hell, she’ll be even more mad if I shove her in a cell and get rid of her powers. I mean, what good will that do me?”

“Probably none.”

“Dustin! You’re supposed to be defending me!”

“What! Mike had a point. If we get rid of Elle’s powers, she’ll only be more upset. And if she’s upset, that’ll do no good. She’s seriously terrifying when someone gives her shit.”

“Thanks Dustin, we’ve noticed.”

“Happy to help,” he smiled, clearly oblivious to Mike’s sarcasm.

“So,” Lucas said carefully, “we’ll just need a new strategy.”

“For what, exactly?”

“For striping her of her powers!” Lucas chimed excitedly. All four boys groaned. “What?”

“Lucas, I think you’re missing the point,” Mike tried, running his hands through his sweaty hair.

“Okay, so what’s the point?”

“We can’t get rid of her powers.”

No one spoke for a few moments.

“What do you mean we can’t get rid of her powers!” Lucas yelled, anger stretching his voice.

“Lucas...”

“No! She tried to kill you, Mike! And you’re still protecting her! I don’t think you get it. She’s evil!”

Mike threw aside his chair, running up to Lucas and pinning him against a wall, eyes filled with rage. “Take. That. Back.”

“No,” the other boy spat. “She’s evil!” he growled.

“Take it back Lucas, God dammit!”

“No!”

“Lucas, you son of a bitch, I swear to...”

“Hey! Dickheads!” Steve yelled, pulling Mike from Lucas and throwing him backwards. He ripped Lucas from the wall and threw him right next to Mike. “Why don’t you stop acting like drunk asshats and try to keep your heads!” The two boys exchanged looks. Steve never got violent. “This girl is getting to both your heads! Mike, the chicks hot, but she’s also terrifying. I mean, shit, she could kill us all with the blink of an eye. Lucas, stop acting like your head is stuck in your ass. Mike shouldn’t have said what he said, but he’s using common sense. We can’t piss this girl off!”

“He’s right,” Lucas admitted. “I’m sorry,” he apologized, extending a hand to Mike, who took it.

“I am, too.”

“Great,” Steve clapped. “Now that we’ve got that sorted out, we’ve got to deal with problem number two.”

“Which is...” Mike quizzed.

Steve smirked, “How do we get Lucas to tell Max that he digs her.”

4. Chapter 4

They were together again, walking side by side in the gardens. Max and Will were still drained, laying on the soft, plush beds in their chambers. Mike had wanted them to be closer to the angels, but Dustin and Lucas protested, leaving them out by the fruit orchards, isolated from everything. She still wore the daisy in her hair, but it was less alive then yesterday, its petals drooping tiredly. Mike put an arm out to stop her, plucking the flower from her hair. He held it tightly in his fingers, inhaling deeply. Elle watched in wonder as the petals magically brought themselves up, their color deepening as life refilled the plant. Mike smiled at her, the cutest grin filling up her face as he tucked the flower back into her hair. She grasped his hand, giving it a squeeze before letting it fall to his side again. They reached the pond, the fish still swimming and the lily pads still afloat.

“May I ask you a question?” Elle asked softly, her eyes glued to the water and she ran her finger through it. Her fingertips burned, the water sizzling around them. “Holy water,” she muttered. “Damn it.” Mike laughed, but answered her question with the same softness she had had moments ago. “Of course.”

“Who were you before you died?”

Mike grimaced, because he wasn’t very fond of talking about his past. And it all seemed like a blur, the world a thousand years ago. “My name was Michael Wheeler. I lived during a time when the Roman Empire was still around. I was one of the first generations angels. I have been a guardian angel, protecting prophets and —”

“That’s not what I asked. I asked who you were. Who were you before a child of God?”

Hesitantly, Mike told her everything. “I’ve always been a child of God. When I was young, my sister Holly was born. My older sister, Nancy, and I were so happy. Until our mom died giving birth. Holly never got to meet her. She struggled. She needed a mother and she didn’t have one. Holly died before she made it to two. Nancy and I were crushed. Our father neglected us, wasting his life away with alcohols and bets. So we were on our own. We had to live by what our mother taught us.”

“What did she teach you, Mike?” Elle’s voice was soft and sorrowful. Mike met her eyes, with tears in his own.

“Even people of evil could show love, and that there was more to

them than it seemed.” Elle went silent, staring at him as he cried. She grasped his hand, not knowing what else she could do. “I waited for so long for my father to come back and take us in. I was an adult when I realized he never cared. Nancy had moved on, and she left me. I was alone.”

“Mike...”

“It’s okay, Elle. I learned that there was more to my father than I could see. He wasn’t an evil man, just a dishonest one, one who couldn’t show love and he couldn’t show faith. I prayed every night, hoping for his safety and protection for me and my father. It never came.”

“What do you mean?”

“Pompeii. Ash was everywhere, burying the town alive. There was an olive orchard, full of beautiful olive trees that had just bloomed. They burned. They caught on fire and burned, just like the town.”

“Mike...” Elle breathed, pulling his into her chest and comforting him, “I’m so sorry.”

They stayed like that, in silence. The only sound that could be heard was the beating of Mike’s heart and Elle’s breath.

“You’re not evil Elle.”

“What?” she whispered. She pulled away, Mike straightening and looking her dead in the eyes.

“You’re not evil.”

She was shocked, her whole body in a state of disbelief. Before she could do anything else, Mike flapped his wings and was gone.

“So that’s what it’s like to have faith,” Elle whispered to herself, smiling at the spot where he had disappeared from.

“What a coward,” Max laughed.

Elle had unleashed everything that had just happened between him and Elle, and Max found it utterly hilarious how he had run away. Will was concerned.

“He shouldn’t be taking such an interest in you,” he warned, turning away from the wall. He had been carving into the stone with the dagger that he had hidden in his shoe so the angels couldn’t find it. Their mission was a long one, and he knew he’d get bored.

Elle rolled her eyes. Typical twin brother protectiveness. “Really, Will? This only makes everything easier!”

"I don't really care if it makes things easier, Elle! He shouldn't take such an interest in you!"

"Why? Because he's an angel and she's a demon? Racist!" Max chortled, dodging the knife Will threw at her. "Play nice, Willy-Will."

"Why don't you go drown yourself in holy water or something?" he groaned, walking over and pulling the knife from the wall. "Okay, now I miss being able to just strangle you without moving."

Max laughed and Elle smiled, and Will smirked from the corner before he turned back to his carving. She had missed this, the three of them joking around and hanging out. She had missed them when they had been gone. Seeing their lifeless forms had brought her back to that winter, the cold freezing them and ripping at their limbs. If Elle closed her eyes, she could still see the frozen bodies surrounding them.

"So how do we get rid of him?" Max questioned, walking over to the windowsill and throwing her legs outside, ripping fruit from the limb of a giant, bearing tree right outside their chamber.

"I don't know," the brunette admitted, flopping down on her cot and staring up at the ceiling. Will had carved a smiley face above it. She smiled, but then frowned and burrowed her eyebrows. "It is a problem."

"He totally likes you," Max teased. "And I think you like him."

"You what!" Will yelled, throwing his knife into the wall, running up to Elle. "You like an angel!"

Lazily, Elle opened one eye. "Of course not Will. He's such a load of faith and holy shit that I almost threw up and drowned myself in that holy water pond. It was pitiful, honestly."

"You better not..." Will threatened, returning to his wall. He picked up the knife and began to carve again, but this time, it was more aggressive.

"First of all, damn Will, chill," Max said, tossing the core of the fruit back out the window, walking back over to Elle. "And second of all, this could work to our advantage."

"Um, how?" Elle scoffed, sitting up and crossing her arms, looking at her friend. She looked over to Will, who was still holding the knife, but he was leaning against the wall, listening as well.

"If he falls in love with you or some bullshit like that, it'll be easier to get to the target. I mean, think about it. This guy believes that you aren't fully evil, which he's right about, but he has no clue that we're here on a contract with Lucifer. We don't have a choice. We're evil to

the bone anytime Satan's concerned. And Mike over here is in puppy-dog love with our little ring leader. So this is gonna work."

"I don't know," Will shrugged, "the guy's friend isn't a complete idiot. He'll get onto us before we even start."

"Leave that to me."

"What? Max, how?" Elle asked, her confusion shared with Will.

"He likes me. That stupid angel Dustin or whatever wouldn't shut up about it last night when he was giving me a tour of our 'natural, heavenly garden' or whatever the hell is outside this snare."

"Great," Will scoffed, "two angels like my sisters. Fabulous."

"Aww," Elle taunted, walking up to Will and kissing his cheek, "I think Willy's being over-protective."

Every few days, Mike came and took Elle all around heaven, taking her to a new place every time. And every time she received dirty looks and sometimes even threats or lunges that came to rip her away from one of their own, but Mike shielded her with his wings, giving fierce looks. Elle smiled smugly. Everything was working in her favor. Except for one thing.

She was starting to like him. She knew this wasn't part of the plan and it would only make the mission harder for her, but she couldn't help it. There was something about the way he looked at her, like she was special and important and wasn't just some ugly creature that everyone hated. There was something about the way he smiled at her, when it was just the two of them in the garden, playing with the koi fish and smelling the floors. There was something about the way he gave her a flower every time he saw her, its petals showing freshness like it had just been plucked on his way to pick her up. She knew it was childish, but she kept each and every single flower in a small tin box under her bed that she had brought with her from hell. It held everything that was important to her. And there was something about the way he looked. His curious brown eyes were haunting, like the wood of an old tree in a mossy forest, and his freckles that covered his face were probably the most precious things she had ever seen. He wasn't ripped, per say, but he wasn't a twig either. He was strong but weak, his arms, legs, and core strong, but his face thin and hands bony. And his hair. All she wanted to do was rake her hands through his curly mop, its tangled so beautiful that

she caught herself staring every goddamn time.

She had tried to tell Max, but Max only told her to focus on the mission. That if they faded they'd have to deal with the wrath of Lucifer when they got home. Elle shivered just thinking about Lucifer's wrath. They wouldn't survive it.

"Come on, Ellie. You're so much smarter than this. He's just a dumb angel, a believer. He's a follower. We're leaders. See, you're already too good for him!"

But Elle couldn't shake him away. Every time they were together, she tried to push him away from her, but she couldn't. She was drawn to him. And she hated herself for it. Max was right, she was so much smarter than this. She was smart enough to rise to the top of hell, to be seated close enough to Lucifer to be trusted with a mission as important as this. And she was screwing it up.

She found herself sitting alone at the pond, staring at the koi fish. Most would swim away, hiding beneath a rock. But three would stay. And they would listen. She would sit there and talk to them, sometimes just stare, and they wouldn't cower away. They would stay there, looking up at her almost sympathetically, like they understood what she was going through, like they wanted to help. Elle thought that they had formed a bond. And it felt nice to have friends in heaven who weren't like her, but who deserved to be there. Today, she sat at the water's edge, her jeans rolled up a little so she could touch the lily pads with her feet, pressing so that they would sink, but lightly enough so that her bare feet wouldn't touch the holy water and burn her. The three koi circled around the lily pads, splashing about, but not hard enough that she would get splashed. Or at least that's what Elle thought. She was desperate to see herself as something other than demonic, and something as simple as three koi fish from heaven liking her was enough to bring her joy. It's the small things that brought her the most happiness. And she rarely felt happiness. It was scarce in hell, just like evil was scarce in heaven.

"Hey guys," she whispered to the fish, her feet pressing down on her another lily pad, sinking it into the cool water, and then allowing it to submerge from the crystal clear water. "I have a problem."

They seemed eager to listen, nipping at the lily pad that floated above their heads, swimming normally near her feet. She laughed.

"Okay okay, I'll tell you. I'm supposed to be here for a reason, and I'm not to be distracted, but Mike is here. And, I don't know, he makes me feel something. It's small, but it's something big enough to

make me feel human again, worthy of life or love. It's dumb, but at least I don't feel alone."

"Well that sentimental."

Elle whipped around, almost falling into the shallow pool. Clutching at the black cloth on her chest, she inhaled deeply, trying to calm her beating heart.

"Lucas," she whispered, "hi."

"Hello Elle."

"How much of that did you hear exactly?"

"Enough." Man this guy was stern. Elle had never seen him without a look of annoyance spread across his face. She pulled at her boots, taking her socks from them and slipping them over her feet.

"What counts as enough?"

"Enough to know that our little bitch visitor has a crush on one of the angels here."

She girmed. She hated being called a bitch, because if anything, she was the closer to being demonic. But she couldn't show her hurt, because if she did, it would be portrayed as a weakness, and she was not weak. "Wow. You know, in hell they said you guys were pricks and that couldn't be farther from the truth."

"Really? Do tell me what we truly are?"

"You guys are straight up douches who have sticks so far up their asses they can't even be seen anymore."

"You tell it as it is."

"Hell yeah I do. We demons lie, but most of the time, I prefer to tell it straight up."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"So that would explain why you were talking to fish about your huge crush on Mike, right?" Elle broke into laughter, hooting so hard that she doubled over, clutching her stomach. "What's so funny?"

"You think I like an angel," she struggled, her giggled dying down.

"I'm not the one who said he makes you feel worthy of love."

"I don't need his love. I have someone else."

"Oh yeah. Let me guess. That Will guy."

She choked on her own tongue. "Will? As in my brother Will? As in my twin brother Will whom I've known all my life? Yeah, no."

"That would explain your similar resemblance."

"Yeah, you think?"

"It...it isn't...Max...she's not...I mean I don't care, but—" he stumbled,

tripping over words. Elle rolled her eyes.

"No, dipshit. She's not into girls. But she sure as hell isn't into angels either."

"Oh." Elle could hear the drop in his voice.

"But I mean, if you like her, I could tell her you're not a complete ass, if you want. But, I mean, you don't like demons, right? We're little satanists and our only purpose is to rip apart heaven and—"

"Fine!" Lucas interrupted, throwing up his hands, "Maybe you guys aren't as bad as everyone says, okay? Listen, my friends and I have been together for centuries and we've never met demons. We didn't know what to expect. But from what I've heard you say, maybe you aren't as bad as you seem. You must really care about Mike to say something that completely goes against all your beliefs.

"Wow, and I'm the sentimental one," she joked.

"Goodbye Elle," Lucas said, rolling his eyes at her sassiness. His wings propelled him into the air, and then he vanished.

"Bye asshole."

5. Chapter 5

“Elle’s avoiding me,” Mike announced to Max. Normally, Mike wouldn’t talk to Max ever, mostly out of fear of the girl. A few days after The Elle Incident, Max had come up to him and punched him so hard he thought he had broken his nose. Much to the fiery redhead’s dismay, he hadn’t.

“Well that’s a shock,” she said, rolling her eyes. “I mean, you did kind of tell her she had no idea what it was like to lose family. After everything she’s told you I’d think that at least you would be considerate enough to not say—”

“Wait, what?”

“What do you mean ‘wait, what?’”

“Max, I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Mike said slowly, drawing out his words.

“She...she didn’t...um, Elle didn’t...she didn’t tell you?”

“Whatever it is, she didn’t tell me.”

“Wow. That’s low.”

“On my part?”

Max took her index finger and thumb and flicked her forehead. “No dipshit. I figured that Elle would’ve told you. I mean, she can’t shut up about you. She tells koi fish about you for shits sake.”

“She talks to fish about me?” Mike blushed.

“Yeah,” Max retorted, rolling her eyes and popping her bubblegum as it inflated into a pink bubble. “It’s super nerdy. She’s asked to go there, like all week. I bet you, like, a million dollars she’s there right now.”

“Thankssomuchmax,” Mike rushed, his words not even separated by a breath as he took flight.

He landed delicately right by the pond. Her back was turned to him, but he almost fell over. She wasn’t wearing her typical black. No, she was in a soft lilac shirt that draped over her like a dress, the fabric falling over her shoulders. Her curls fell gently against the back of her neck, rippling over her left shoulder. Her feet were bare and her legs were fully exposed, no denim concealing them, tucked underneath her. When he got closer, his figure inching closer and closer, he heard her quietly talking.

“...I don’t know. He didn’t know. It’s not his fault, but part of me is still angry at him. I know I shouldn’t, but I am. But the other part of

me is longing for him. Max has told me to just let him go, that he doesn't matter but I'm still drawn to him. Pretending not to love him is the hardest thing I've ever done."

"Elle," he creaked. She had literally taken his breath away. And then confessed she loved him. Loved him. Mike.

"Mike," she squeaked, almost falling into the pool. Shakily standing, she asked quietly, "What the hell are you doing here!"

"Max told me you were here..."

"Oh."

They stood there, in awkward silence before Mike couldn't take it anymore. He ran up to her, wrapping her in a hug and picking her up off the ground.

"I'm so sorry Elle," he sobbed, his tears soaking into her shirt. "I didn't know. I didn't know, I'm so sorry."

"Mike," she cried, her own tears falling down onto his shirt. "Mike, it's okay. I promise. I forgive you."

She had let go of him, but he didn't want to let go of her. When he finally did let go, she put a hand on his cheek, wiping away a tear. He let his head fall into her hand, her small fingers embracing his cheekbones.

"I'm so sorry Elle," he whispered. "You didn't deserve that."

"Mike," she said gently, "it's okay. I should be the one apologizing. I almost killed you..."

"No," he said, putting his hand on top of her, pulling her into his chest, "you didn't mean to Elle."

"Yes I did," she choked, tears flooding from her eyes once more. "I did. I was holding you there like I was going to kill you. I knew I was hurting you, and I didn't stop."

"I don't care," he said simply.

"What?" she asked, pulling out of his arms.

"I don't care."

"You should care! I could've...Mike, that's foolish of you. I'm dangerous and you should stay away from—"

Mike's lips interrupted her, gently brushing against hers, and then aggressively meeting them. Elle wrapped her arms around his neck, bringing him closer to her as she stood on her tiptoes. Mike found her waist, one hand resting on her hip, the other on the small of her back. It was like she was hungry for him, like something could blow up behind them and she wouldn't even look back at it. Mike felt the same way, his lips finding her neck. They gently ran up and down

before running down her jawline, and then back to her lips.

“Son of a bitch...” Dustin breathed. Mike blushed. “You made out with a demon!”

“Dustin, lower your voice!” Mike hissed. The two were sitting in the willow tree, watching Max and Lucas run around on the grassy hill. Max was laughing, and Lucas couldn’t take his eyes off her. Everything seemed at peace.

“Did you like it?”

Mike looked at him like he was crazy. “Of course I liked it! Why wouldn’t I?”

“So, your lips didn’t catch on fire or something bitchin’ like that?”

“Yes dipshit, my lips caught on fire because she’s from hell and I’m from heaven.”

“It was just a theory...”

“Well it was a dumb theory.”

They both looked back at the hill. Max was running around, her hair flying in the wind when suddenly Lucas grabbed her arm, pulling her into him. The laughter stopped, her nose only inches from his. She softly placed a hand on his cheek, and then brought her lips to his, kissing him carefully. When he pulled away, his grin could be spotted from miles away.

“I think you and Lucas should start a club,” Dustin remarked.

Mike laughed. “Yeah. It’ll be called ‘We’re from heaven but have disobeyed every law in place so we could make out with some hot demons.’”

“Wish I could be in that club...”

“Well, if you’re into guys...”

“Nah. I mean, no offense to your girlfriend or whatever, but Will isn’t my type. Plus, I’m pretty sure he’s screwing Joshua. You know, the guy who works down in the orchard by their chamber? I saw them, like, shirtless and making out against a tree. But we’re friends.”

“Wow, okay. I’ll be sure to never mention that to Will ever.”

“You know, you’re lucky.”

“I am.”

“Lucas too.”

“Dustin, you almost sound melancholy. Is there something I should know?”

He sighed. "I liked Max."

"Oh."

"Yeah. I always thought she was beautiful, but when started hanging out as a group, I always envied how much she liked Lucas. She was just so perfect for me and I guess I should be happy for him, and it's a sin to be envious, but I can't help it. Haven't you ever sinned, Mike?"

"Of course I have. What's happening between me and Elle right now is considered a sin by almost every angel out there."

"No, I mean like one of the seven deadly sins."

"Oh. Lust."

"Lust?"

"Yes. I wanted Elle to be mine so badly, but I knew she never could be mine. Or, thought. I still want her. She hadn't left my mind since earlier. I think some of it is greed. I want her. I need her. So, yeah. I've tripled sinned in the past three hours. I think I win," he added smugly.

"Yeah," Dustin said lightly, smiling a little.

"I really am sorry."

"It's okay. There's nothing I can do now but be happy for my friend."

"Yeah."

"Max!" Elle called, her voice echoing in the empty halls. "Will! Guys, help!" She knew her voice couldn't be heard, but she screamed relentlessly anyways. They were her family, and they were gone.

"Hello child," a terrifying voice came, creeping around Elle. "I'm here now. I'm your Papa and I will take very good care of you."

"Do you promise?" she cried, her little form shaking. This man didn't look like the kind that could love.

"Of course I promise. I wouldn't be a very good Papa if I couldn't promise to care for and love you. You'll be safe here."

"Okay."

"Good girl. I want to show you to your new room. Follow me," he said, offering a hand. Nervously, she took it, following him down the hall as they left the room. "You're going to be my favorite, Eleven, I can just tell. You're already so obedient. Obedient children are rewarded. Naughty children aren't quite so lucky. You remember the mountains, don't you?" Elle shuddered at the memory. "Well, that's where naughty children go. Except, they don't come back. Ever. But you won't be naughty, will you?" She violently shook her head. "I didn't think so."

“Will I see my brother and sister again?”

“Twelve and Thirteen?” She nodded. “Probably not. They might not even make it through the war. Now, now child, there are no need for tears. You’ll be alright. If the angels are in your favor, you’ll be okay.”

“Angels?” she peeped.

“Yes, child. Angels. They watch over us to protect us from the devil. In here, the angels are our guards. The people outside our walls are devils. Never trust anyone outside these walls. They will try to kill you. But once I rip apart dimensions, all of the worlds problems will be solved. There will be no war, only peace. And you. You will help me stop the war. You’ll steal information from our enemies, helping us take control. You will be the most successful spy we will produce.”

“But I’m only twelve. Please let me go. Let me go back to Mama and Aunt Becky and Willy. Please!” she screamed, her voice echoing once more.

“Tsk ts, girl,” he murmured, gripping her arm and dragging her to a room, the skin on her knees ripping open as it broke against the rough floor. “You’ll regret not following direct commands.” He threw open a door and tossed her inside, her head slamming into the metal cot. “You have no family anymore. You have me or you have death. Take your pick.”

And then he locked the door and left her in there to cry.

Elle sat up violently, sweat trickling down her forehead. Wiping away the tears leaking from her eyes, she looked over to her siblings. They had a job to do.

It was well past midnight when the three snuck out, jumping down onto the low, hanging limbs of the trees lining the orchard. It had been several days since Max and Lucas had happened, and several days since Mike and Elle had happened. And Elle still had butterflies. But they needed to carry out this mission. There stampeding feet carried them as they ran towards the gardens where they had been locked up, powers deprived. Elle inhaled the air, letting herself run freely, no shackles bearing her down. This was not like hell.

Almost running into Max, who had stopped at the cell, Elle pulled herself together. Quickly tucking a hair behind her ear, she whispered, “Have you got the knife Will?”

Swiftly, he handed her the blade. Signaling them, they followed her around the corner as she searched for the blue honeysuckle. It was hard in the early morning darkness to see the radiant blue flower, but after a minute or so of searching, her keen eye found the flower. Nodding to her siblings, she slit her palm, allowing a drop of blood to fall into its petals. Will and Max did the same, wincing a little before they stepped into the cell.

Will cleared his throat. *“Flore hyacinthi mi maledictum relaxet vires convertere. Redde retributionem daemonibus ad mensuram palmae diabolo umeris perdúcat.”* A flash of blue light blinded them, but then burned out.

Max and Will immediately tested their powers, shoving away the locked cell door, smirking at one another.

“Hell yeah baby,” Max shouted, her voice echoing.

“Max,” Will scolded, “shut up!”

“I’m not even sorry!” The redhead exclaimed, her excitement radiating off of her. “I’m back and ready to kick ass!”

Elle laughed, but then suddenly felt guilty. Mike trusted her and she had just broke all of it behind his back. She was here to overthrow, and he believed that there was still enough good in her to not do so. Tomorrow night, she would return back to hell, her trophy within her possession as she handed it over to Lucifer himself. And then Mike would never love her again. But she wanted him to love her.

Why did she do this? Why did she make such a mess of things even though she knew she had a set destiny? She was about to ruin Mike’s life and part of her wanted to be happy about it. How was that even human? Sadness and anger paged at her gut, but reason and regret shoved them aside, dominating her feelings. She should’ve let Mike go when she had the chance, when she hadn’t fallen so deeply for him. All day tomorrow, the three were long to be plotting, shutting everyone out, saying they were ill. And then they would strike at midnight, turning paradise into chaos and ruin. And part of her didn’t feel guilty.

Will and Max ran ahead, unnecessarily using their powers as they went, zapping flowers and moving rocks. Trees shook and clouds turned into demonic symbols. They didn’t even care. Their audible happiness was undeniably beautiful as it echoed in the valley. Elle trudged behind them, regretting every choice she had made since she had gone to hell. Everything leading up to hell were the best decisions she had ever made.

“Ellie, come on! Let’s celebrate!” Max called. She and Will were already over the hill.

“Yeah, in a second,” she called back. “I need to take care of something first.”

6. Chapter 6

Mike awoke to the Elle pulling his eyelids open, letting go so they'd slam into his face.

"Wake up Mike," she demanded, sitting on the windowsill.

"Elle? What the hell!"

"Come on Mike. I need you to take me to the garden. It's time."

"It's time? It's time for what?"

"For me to tell you who I am."

Quickly standing up, Mike wrapped Elle in a hug, lifting her off the ground as he jumped off the windowsill, his wings catching them as they plumbited towards the ground. Soaring in the midnight sky, they glided until they reached the garden, stars flying past them. Elle smiled, closing her eyes and inhaling the early air. Mike grinned at her, flapping his wings to a stopping point, skidding to a stop in front of the koi pond. They sat across from one another, Elle's face pondering as she looked deeply into the koi pond.

"It was 1942," she began after minutes of silence, her voice shaky, "and they had us. Me, Max, and Will. We were spies for the Russians. Me and Will were American, while Max was Russian. She had lived there all her life, watched her family get shot and poisoned by mustard gas. Will and I had been kidnapped from our home in America, stripped of our identities. We didn't have names, just numbers. I was Eleven, and they were Twelve and Thirteen. That's where I got Elle from. Jane Ives was just too painful to go back to being called. Mama and Aunt Becky didn't even know what happen. They woke up and I was gone. And the worst part of all this was we didn't know was gonna happen to us. They just tormented us daily, telling us that we were serving for the greater good, but we knew we weren't. They separated us, and threw us into prison cells like we were rabid animals."

They tested us. Pushed us. Ruined us. Test after test they put us through the impossible. Hell, they left us outside for three days in the Russian mountains, during winter, with nothing to eat or keep us warm. There were twenty of us at the start of that mission. There were six afterwards. I must've done something right sometimes during my testing because the next thing I know Max and Will are thrown into the scrap compound with a new group of test subjects while I'm locked down into a chair, injected with a serum and razors

that shave my hair. They turned me into a weapon, a spy. That was their mission. To take kids and turn them into weapons to fight a petty war. And the man in charge was evil. Russian scientist Dr. Brenner, who believed that he alone could rip the dimension between space and time, releasing its evils powers to win the war. He said he was my Papa, and he was here to help me become the best me. And I was so scared I believed him. I never should have. He tortured me, tested me until my nose bleed so badly I almost died. He didn't even care."

My Dad saved us. His name was Jim Hopper and he was an American spy. His mission was to rescue everyone in that lab, to save us from the Russian monster. Initially, his mission was to only rescue the people like Max and Will, who hadn't been changed into weapons, but he tells a story of running down the halls of the lab, doing a once-over before blowing the place to bits and he found me in a corner, hospital gown clinging to my stick legs and pale, thin form, blood squirting down from my nose and running down my chin and neck, and he couldn't leave me. He couldn't. I was so close to dead and he couldn't leave me."

He took the three of us home. He saw after we got back together that we couldn't be separated again. Brother from sister, sister from sister. He couldn't bring himself to do it. So he took us home to Hawkins, Indiana, where we lived with him, our Mom, Joyce, and our brother, Jonathan. And we were happy. It was just the six of us, and we went to school like normal kids. We were normal kids. Sure, the serum sometimes still affected me, and we later found that I was telekinetic. But everyone in the Hopper family accepted me. I was Eleven or 'Elle' Hopper. They loved me."

And everything was great until three years after when Jonathan, Dad, and Mom were driving home from Chicago. They had gone to look for colleges close to home Jonathan's senior year. We still don't know what happened, maybe they swerved to miss an animals or something, but the crashed and they all fell into comas. We were devastated. Services were trying to put us into foster homes and take us away from them, but they were still alive. Barely, but still alive. And we knew we had to do something. Will was our reader and he found somewhere, somehow, that you could sell your soul to save someone else. So, we went to a cross-road and did exactly as the book instructed, burying our pictures and some other crap in a tin box. And a demon appeared. It scared the shit out of us, but we knew

what we had to do. We all sold our souls to save them. One person can only save one person and there were three of us and three of them. We were given a year.”

And when that year came to a closing end, we knew we had to tell Dad. Mom will break down crying and Jonathan wouldn’t know what to do. Dad was the only one who would understand. The night before we died, around 11:58 we told him. We told him everything and he cried. We didn’t know what to do. He cried and told us to reverse it, that he’d go to save us all. But we knew we couldn’t. And at 12:00 the next morning, the hellhounds came, dragging us down to hell.”

Elle was crying, tears streaming down her face and landing in the water, burning and bubbling down towards the bottom. Mike sat there, breathlessly, trying to process everything she had told him.

“You guys sold your souls to save someone else.”

“Yeah,” she whispered, wiping her eyes. “We had too. They were our family. They were the only ones who cared.”

“Elle, I’m so sorry.”

“Our Dad and Mom and Jonathan went to heaven. We sold our souls if he promised to keep them out of hell. He demanded nothing but obedience and loyalty to him and we quickly agreed, so Lucifer let them go. And they’re here now. I don’t know where, and I don’t know if they’re angels, but they’re here.”

She was silent, sliding her hand into Mike’s, but still avoiding eye contact.

“We never wanted to be demons.”

“What?”

“We never wanted to be demons,” she said, raising her eyes to meet his. “No one does. But once you get down in hell, everyone’s souls rip apart for decades until the pain you’ve suffered and love you’ve lost kills you and the demons chasing you become you. And it’s painful and haunting because Elle Hopper is still in here. She’s still here and she talks to me, and the same goes for Will and Max. We’re all still here. But we’re demons who’ve pledged our loyalty, and we can’t ever take that back.”

“What does she say? Elle, I mean.”

She sighed, looking at Mike, pulling herself closer inch by inch, “She mostly talks about you. All good things.”

“Like what,” he asked breathlessly. All he could think about was her, punishing himself internally for the lust taking over him. But her hands were on his leg, and then his hip, and he couldn’t stop thinking

about everything that he wanted to do with her.

Her eyes flickered between his neck and eyes, hungry. "Like this," she whispered, pulling his lips to hers.

Mike could feel the fire, a battle between heaven and hell dancing upon their lips. Everything was so right and so wrong, but he couldn't pull away. He pulled her into her, deepening the kiss as his lips fell off hers and onto her neck, exploring her skin. She laughed and that only made him more famished. He put his weight of her, his wings flapping as dust and flower petals flew around them, the two falling into one another. Elle was on her back and Mike was on his elbows over her, kissing her harder and harder.

They were in his chamber, pressed against a wall. Elle didn't even remember coming back, but she didn't care. His lips were all over her neck and she couldn't care less in fact. His fingers were under the hem of her shirt. Her arms were wrapped around his neck, and her legs wrapped around his bare waist, his shirt somewhere on the other side of the room. His wings were wrapped around her, separating her back from the wall. She knew she had to stop, to get back to her chamber and rest with Will and Max, but she couldn't leave. It felt like a magnet was dragging her down, pinning her to Mike and she couldn't leave. And god, she didn't want to.

"Mike," she moaned, her body feeling like it was on fire everywhere he touched. "We have to stop."

"I know," he murmured into her neck, "but I don't want to." He let her down, removing his wings from out behind her. He placed his hands on the wall, surrounding her, leaning into his palms.

"Hi," she whispered.

"Hi," he muttered. He tucked a strand of hair behind her ear, eyeing the discolored patch of skin on her neck, dragging his eyes back up to hers. "God, you're so beautiful."

And that flipped the switch. Elle couldn't resist it anymore. She shoved him back towards the bed, pulling her shirt over her head and tossing it somewhere on the floor. She slowly walked over to him, swaying her hips in a way while she walked that she knew would drive him insane. And it didn't. His eyes couldn't leave her waist and he bit down on his lips, his eyes hungry. She climbed slowly onto the bed, laying herself down slowly on top of him, bringing her lips to his

ear.

"Come and get it," she teased, her voice hushed.

Mike flipped over on top of her, his body hovering inches above hers. He moved his lips down across her jawline, and then down onto her neck, and then her shoulder. She could feel his tongue move along the grooves of her collarbone, his lips pressed harshly against it. Everything seemed to move slow, but at the same time everything was quickly paced. She loved her curve of his body hanging above her.

Mike felt as her fingers trailed over his waist, outlining his upper body as they ran along his chest and arms, racing upon his neck and then his face. God, she was beautiful. And she was his. He didn't know what he had come to deserve someone as incredible as this, but he wasn't going to argue. He fell down beside her, his chest heaving as he smiled up at the ceiling. She rolled over, laying her head and hand on his chest.

"I love you Mike," she whispered.

"I love you Elle," he whispered, running his hands through her tangly hair.

He felt her lips curl into a smile against his skin, his whole body tingling. She moved herself further in his chest, her entire chest mirroring his, legs tangled up with his. He let out a shaky breath as her lips clamped down onto the left side of his neck. The feeling of her lips leaving bruises up and down his neck was paradise. Lips on the move, they ran down onto his chest. She gently hit at the skin below his left collarbone.

"Elle," he moaned, his eyes closed, loving every second she spent working with her lips, "don't ever stop. Jesus Christ!"

She laughed into his chest, nose pressed against his skin. "I don't want to, but I have too," she whispered, pressing a light kiss just right of his shoulder.

"No, you really don't," he murmured, kissing her forehead. "We can stay here for the rest of our lives. Or we could go to earth. Forget all this angel and demon shit and just be free."

"Tempting," she teased, running her finger down from his forehead, over the top of his nose, and tracing it down his lips, pulling at his bottom one, "but I can't. God still has to decide my fate, and I'm probably going back downstairs."

"Exactly! If we just run now, we'll be safe."

"Mike, that'll screw up everything you've worked for here. You're

trusted. Becoming a fallen angel...Mike, when you become a human and you eventually die, you'll go to hell."

"If it means spending an eternity with you, it'll be worth it."

"Mike, I'm not letting you throw away your dignity and place in heaven just so you can run away with a demon!"

"You're not a demon," he murmured, running a hand down her cheek, pulling her lips to him so he could deeply kiss her.

"Mike..."

"No, don't even..."

He pulled him even closer, wrapping an arm around his waist. She fell deeply into him, letting her lips take over and sending her brain into the corner. She didn't want any thoughts of leaving him in a few hours dragging her down. Their legs tangled, their breathing becoming one. She knew she had to stop. It would only make tomorrow harder. Elle pulled away, taking a deep breath, opening her eyes to meet his beautiful ones only staring back.

"I'll go," Elle smiled, brushing her lips against his chest.

"You promise?"

"Promise," she choked.

Mike grinned from ear to ear, lighting up the dark. He bent his head down to hers, pressing his forehead against hers.

"So, he's meeting us tomorrow?" Max evilly grinned.

"Yes," Elle whispered, tears clouding her eyes. She couldn't believe she'd lied to him. She had woken up next to him, his eyes already open and staring at her, a smile plastered on his face.

"You're so beautiful," he had whispered, running a hand gently over her cheek.

Max's rough laugh, as scratchy as someone running their fingernails over sandpaper, brought her back from her thoughts.

"Aww, it's okay Ellie. He wasn't worth it!"

"Oh yeah. Let me guess, Lucas wasn't worth it either!"

Max's face dreamed all color, but almost instantly twisted into a sneer. "I didn't let it get as far as you did. Or Will did, for that matter."

"Screw off Maxine. I got us information, power. I played my part, you played your, and Elle played hers. We're going to complete this mission and we'll be rewarded."

“So gaining information includes literally screwing in the orchards,” Max chuckled, her laughter twisting from the sweet giggle it had been during their time here to her demonic chortle.

“I did what I had to. Trust me, I wouldn’t have screwed an angel if it wasn’t 100% necessary.”

“Why not?” Elle growled, suddenly defensive. “Angels aren’t that bad, okay? We are so much worse! I mean, we cheat people. And we lie. And we trick! We’re literally created by evil. We’re literal shit!”

“Woah there, Ellie,” Max warned, snarl in her voice. “We’re in this situation because you wanted to feel worthy and avenge your death.”

“Shut up...” Elle whispered, her voice threatening, like a lion about to pounce on an gazelle.

“Well that’s why we’re here. We’re this deep in shit because you wanted to save our family even.”

“Shut up Max...”

“Max, come on, stop,” Will pleaded.

“It’s. All. Your. Fault,” the girl hissed.

Elle’s hand were on Max’s jacket, pinning her against the wall. “Take. It. Back!” she gritted teeth, which were clenched and bearing. “Take it back Max!”

“No,” the redhead choked, her eyes narrowed. “Not until you admit it. The truth.”

Elle narrowed her eyes, blood trickling out of her nose. She watched as Max began to cough, blood dripping from her mouth. She was doing this to her sister.

“Elle!” Will yelled, grabbing her arm, but she sent him flying with a simple nod of her head. He groaned, rolling over. The wall crumbled a little as he fell to the floor. “Elle,” he moaned, “stop.”

The brunette didn’t listen. She narrowed her eyes even further, turning them into tiny slivers that barely were visible. How could she let this go? Max had infected her in the wound that still lingered. And the worst part was that she was right. It was her fault. She had caused all of this, started all of this. And she was only here to avenge her mistake. All of them. Elle fell to her knees, her powers failing her as she crumbled mentally and physically. Everything she had kept locked up inside her had broken open.

Max and Will cowered in their corners, covering their ears as she screamed. The pitiful sound echoed into the night, waking the dead. The pain that had brought her here was released, burning at her insides. It had been eating her alive, leaving her empty. Elle

screamed until her throat burned and every sound had left her, her voice box bone dry. She bowed her head, blood gushing from her nose. Tears fell to the floor, tinting the maroon puddle on the floor.

"You're right," she choked hoarsely. "I did do this. It is all my fault."

Will brushed himself off, limping a bit as he walked over to her, falling to his knees and hugging her deeply. He cradled her head, comforting his twin as she cried. Max timidly walked over, wrapping her arms around her two siblings. She pressed a small kiss to Elle's head as she trembled, blood still wet on Max's chin. Her chest heaved, her lungs still raw from the blood Elle had drawn from them.

"I'm so sorry," she whispered, stuttering and coughing on sobs.

"It's okay, Ellie," she sympathized. "I shouldn't have said what I did. It's not your fault."

"But it is."

"Elle..." Will muttered, running a hand through her curly mop.

"No," she moaned. She straightened her voice, sitting up to address them, "It is. When Dad, Mom, and Jonathan died I couldn't take it. I couldn't take another loss. So I dug and dug and rushed through everything reasonable. I became obsessed. I had to find something that could save them, and that greed and lust is what led us here. I just... I couldn't lose anything and I lost myself, which only made anything worse. And then I dragged you two into it because I was just so desperate that I couldn't see the dark path I was skipping merrily down. And I'm sorry. I should've just left them dead..."

Max tried to his her tears, sniffing and then wiping her eyes casually. Will just let the tears flood like a child. His eyes were red as he rubbed them for the one thousandth time. He coughed and sputtered, just like he had when they were children and had been kidnapped. He took a deep breath.

"Well, if it means anything to you, I'm glad you dragged us into this," Will said, his voice wavering. "I'd never have wanted you to have to go through all of this all alone."

"We should've been for you there more," Max said, her face stone. "But you have to understand that we were grieving, too, Ellie. We wanted to save them too, but you're right. You dragged us into this. And I can't share the same enthusiasm as Will."

"Max..." Elle whispered.

"No! I had my life ahead of me! You stole that from me, Ellie." Max stood up, throwing her hands and shaking her head. She turned to look at Elle, narrowing her eyes. "You're right. You should've just left

them dead! Then we wouldn't be in this situation, you greedy son of a bitch!"

"Max," Will hissed. "Shut up." He stood up, squaring her shoulders, confronting her. "You didn't have to agree. You did. That's on you!"

"Like I wouldn't sign up to save my parents! She just didn't tell us about all this shit!"

"She didn't know!"

"I'm pretty sure she did, asshole!"

"If she did, she would've found a different way!"

"That's not true! You heard her, Willy. She was desperate! She became obsessed! She lost her head!"

"Screw off Max!" Will said, shoving her a little bit. She shoved him back, but harder. And then he let her fly, her pale body slamming into the wall. She held out her hand, strangling him, but he fought her off. And just as he was about to finish her off, Elle stood up, blocking him.

"Stop! Stop it!"

"Elle, move," Will gritted.

"Yeah, Ellie," Max spat. "Let me get a blow at this motherf--"

"Stop." Elle commanded sternly. "She's right, Will. I did lose my head when we lost Mom, Jonathan, and Dad. But he's also right, Max. I never would've dragged you into this if I knew you two would be hurt. If I did, I never would've brought you into this. But right now, none of that should matter. In a few hours, the mission will be finished and all of this can be over."

"Fine," Max spat. "But when this is over, I never want to see you assholes ever again." She jumped out of the window before Elle could take another breath.

7. Chapter 7

Mike didn't want to be late. He looked at himself one more time in the mirror before he left to meet Elle. This was the night where they would leave together and be free from everything that confined them. And then when they returned to earth, they could be together for as long as the mortal lives took. He smiled, just thinking of spending every morning waking up next to her, the sun glowing on her cheeks, just as he had that morning. Shaking his head, Mike pulled a shirt over his head and jumped from his window, letting his wings take him to their meeting place.

The air seemed thinner than normally, the clouds less dense, his wings slicing through them. The sun shined brighter, turning the land below him from a rich green to the color of a lime rind. The melody of the birds singing in the trees below harmonized with the feeling bubbling up inside him. Mike let out a whoop, sending the birds flying into the air, frightenedly swarming around him. Everything felt perfect. That was, until his bare feet touched to the ground.

Elle was sitting next to pond, tears dripping into the water. She didn't look up as he landed, only bowed her head and bit her lip. He felt as if someone had taken a dagger and stabbed it through his heart. He couldn't bear seeing her upset. Cautiously, he took a step towards her. And that's when Elle looked at him. And Mike wished she hadn't. Face blotchy and red, tears streaming down her face.

"Ellie?" he asked, his voice silky and full of love.

She laughed a bit, standing up and running a hand briefly through her hair. He felt his heart crumble. Why did she have to be so beautiful. She walked towards him, pulling him into a tight hug, letting herself bury her head in his chest. Shakily, she let go, stepping back. "I'm so sorry, Mike..."

"Wha—" Mike started, but he was cut short by the dagger impaling his side.

He crumbled to the ground, knees buckling as he clutched his side. Will ran up behind Max, tying him up. She pinned his wings to his back while Will tied up his hands, chaining them with cuffs inscribed with spells that would confine him despite his struggles. Max ripped Mike's head up, his hair tightly held in her strong clutch. His eyes met Elle's.

"This was a trap," he laughed, voice laced with anger and hurt,

shaking his head. "So Dustin and Lucas were right. You really are just an evil son of a bitch."

Stone faced, Elle stared down at him. She had no emotion. Not even when Will kicked him in the face, hissing at him for calling his sister a bitch. Not even when Dustin and Lucas came out of nowhere, falling from clouds. Not even when Max and Will iced them, tying them up just like Mike. She just stood there, looking at the chaos she had let rupture.

She felt Will's hand on her shoulder. "It's time." She nodded. She couldn't even speak. Elle felt Will lace his hand through hers. She gave him a small smile, and a soft hand squeeze.

"Let's get this show on the road."

Max and Will nodded, picking up their cargo. Tying the other side of the shackles to their own wrists, they led the dumbfounded Dustin and Lucas. The two couldn't even speak, and honesty, were too scared to. Elle bent down, placing the other end of Mike's bound to herself.

"Up," she commanded. But he sat. "Mike, get your ass off the ground."

"We were supposed to be free," he whispered tear in his eyes. "We were supposed to be together!" he yelled, his voice echoing. With a flick of her hand, Elle put a bond over his mouth, quieting him. And when he refused to budge, she made him stand and walk.

They trudged silently in the dark towards the gates of heaven where they would meet their chauffeurs. Dustin and Lucas trembled together, walking with not even an inch between them. Will and Max stood beside one another, but didn't say a word. The words said earlier still burned between them. Mike and Elle brought us the rear. Mike tried to fight the bonds, but everytime Elle felt him struggle, she only tightened her grip. She could feel the blood trickling from her nose.

Max and Will stopped suddenly. They had reached the barrier. Smirking, Max blew the border to pieces, a siren wailing as the hole enlarged. Billy, Tommy, and Sharol came out from behind the corner, evilly grinning.

"Well, well, well. If it isn't the pricks. How was heaven?" Tommy smirked, slapping Billy on the back.

Will stepped forward, fists clenched, but Max spoke for all of them. "Screw off assholes. At least we can do shit like this and aren't too pathetic that we're stuck possessing old farts."

The three stopped smirking, snarling, but grabbed the three angels

anyways. They knew they were in no place to fight with demons superior to them. Especially ones that were given special mission from Lucifer himself.

“No need to be gentle with them,” Max added, drawing open an entrance to hell. “They’re not important to us are they, Elle?”

Mike looked up at the girl, his eyes pleading. But her face stayed as still as stone, no emotion even in her eyes.

“No, they’re not.”

Cowering in the hell-mobile, Lucas, Mike, and Dustin sat in the back, all light up cut off from there except for the small crack. If they peered through, they could see Billy driving, his foot pressing as hard as he could on the gas pedal. Sharol and Tomtt were hooking up in the backseat of the car, clothes flying. Dustin ended up putting his back to the crack of light. Being scared in the dark was better than being scared with dirty underwear and skin in your face.

“I can’t believe this,” Lucas muttered. “I thought you said that they were trustworthy!”

“Well, I thought they were. I guess I was wrong.”

“That’s a pussy excuse Mike! You were wrong? Like hell you were!”

“Okay, what do you want me to say, Lucas? That I messed up? Okay, I did. I completely fucked up! I majorly fucked up! Does that make you feel any better?”

“No...” he sulked, pouting with his arms crossed over his chest.

“Yeah, doesn’t exactly make me feel peachy either.”

“You know what screw both of you!” Dustin exclaims med. “If I hadn’t met either of you, I wouldn’t be in such deep shit!”

“Well, excuse me your highness but I think that right about now we all were wishing we hadn’t met Mike!”

“And you know what? I have a huge ass question!”

Mike sighed tiredly, turning in the pitch black in the direction he believed his curly haired, toothless friend was. “And what would Señor Nerdiness?”

“Why are we in a car? I mean, we can teleport, so can’t demons?”

“We’re on earth, genius. They’re taking us in the daylight in a normal car in a normal town on normal roads with enchantments carved into the interior of the car to not draw any attention. They’re taking us to a gate and bringing us down that way.”

“Why?”

“Why Dustin? Because the angels know what these demons look like! If they just teleported to and fro, they could be caught and killed! They’re being smart!”

“And Mike’s still defending them...” Lucas mumbled, but he did so loud enough so that he could be sure his friend heard.

Although Mike didn’t react verbally or physically towards Lucas, his hands were clenched in fists and his teeth were clenched tightly. He knew he had messed up, trusting and falling in love with a demon, but Lucas had done the same. He had fallen quickly for Max after gaining her trust, but Mike chose not to bring this up. He decided it would do no good.

The car screeched to a stop, the three boys slamming into one another and hitting their heads on the car roof. They heard car doors open, and evil, bitter laughter burn the air. Matches sparked, the three smelled the smoke, as the demons lit their cigarettes, resting after their drive.

“Why did we stop!” Dustin quietly hissed.

“They’re lazy asses,” Lucas muttered, rolling his eyes. “And we’re stuck with them until they tie us up with a bow and hand-deliver us to Satan.”

“Oh.” The curly hair boy’s brow was furrowed as he thought deeply.

“So why are we in a car? I mean, demons can teleport, right?”

“Yeah, but we can’t teleport with them. It would be too easy for archangels to track them down. We’d lead them right to hell’s gate and that would do no good for them!”

“Oh.”

Mike fiddled with his hands, wrapping them around one another. Late night, Elle’s hand had been in his and now he was sitting here regretting ever defending her. This was his fault. Lucas was right. They should’ve just drained her powers when she wasn’t strong enough to destroy heaven. When she didn’t mean anything to him. No, that was a lie. And he couldn’t lie to himself. She had always meant something to him, from the moment they’d met. He thought that last night was when he fell in love with Elle, but this treacherous car ride made him realize it wasn’t just one thing that had led to her capturing his heart. It was her laugh at the koi fish, the way she talked to them, leaning over the water, her fingertips inches from the surface and hair dangling in front of her face. It was the way she hugged him, wrapping her arms so tightly around him that it was like

she would never hold him again, taking in his scent. It was the way she spoke when she was happy, the sneer and sass gone and she was just a normal kid again. It was her smile when she looked at him, small and faint, but still there.

He leaned back into the car, closing his eyes. He had been so stupid to think that it wasn't a trap. Mike pondered to himself, imaging what it would be like if she hadn't been a demon, just another angel. They could've been together, hands knotted as she talked to the fish or walking through the garden for an eternity. But she sold her soul. She could've come her and met him, living out their eternities together.

She knew she shouldn't be thinking of him, but she was. Elle couldn't seem to free herself of Mike. Not even now, sitting in the depths of hell with Max and Will, watching and drinking and laughing as newbies came in and got third asses whooped, demons from centuries before Elle's time slicing them to shreds with knives, and then their pieces reforming. That was the bad part about living eternally in hell; you could be sliced and diced and tormented slowly, you're organs being slowly ripped from your skin by a spoon, and you would wake up minutes later perfectly in tack. There was nothing you could do to escape it.

Elle took a shot Max handed her, her lungs burning as the hell juice squeezed down and sizzled in her stomach. She felt woozy, her head spinning around the room. Max and Will's laughter seemed wavy, like the sound waves were having a seizure. A voice inside screamed at her.

"It's your fault!" it reprimanded. "You screwed your family and you screwed Mike! You screw everyone you come to love! You've failed everything!"

She silenced it with more alcohol, the liquid flooding her blood and common sense. But she sat there with her siblings, letting everything be washed away. The regret faded.

And it didn't return until she was stumbling around an hour past midnight. Her boots slammed into the rocky bottom, her figure slamming into countless demons and walls, not even knowing if she was apologizing to an actual living thing. Or, at least, something that took in oxygen. Elle didn't even know where she was going, the only

unintoxicated part of her brain taking the wheel, and Jesus, it was doing a shit job. It led her straight to the cages in the depths of hell, where Lucifer sat and overlooked the prisoners waiting their turns to be slaughtered brutally. There were hundreds of cages, but only three were full. And her drunken-ass marched straight up to Mike's.

"Mikey," she giggled, hiccuping. "Hell of a party isn't it?" She burst into loud, obnoxious chuckles. "Get it? Hell? We're in hell! I'm hysterical."

"Absolutely hysterical," Lucas snapped, utterly annoyed.

"Why Lucas, don't be so rude. Last I saw you, you were exchanging mucus with Max. Hey...Lucas and mucus rhyme," the girl slurred.

"Why are you here Elle?" Mike said quietly, tears filling his eyes.

"I wanted to see you."

"Why?"

"So I could beep your nose!" she slurred happily, extending her finger towards his face it severely missing, hitting her hand on the cell door.

"Oops!"

"Elle, I think you should go..."

"But we're having so much fun!"

"I think you're the only one having fun, sweetheart," Dustin murmured.

With a flick of her finger, Elle sent him flying into the opposite side of his cage. "Don't be rude," she laughed, "when the hostess compliments herself. That's being a poor guest."

"No offense, but your house is shit," Lucas commented, earning himself a trip to the corner of his dungeon.

"You guys need to be more respectful. I'm trying my hardest over here!"

"Elle," Mike whispered, "you need to go."

"Why?" she whined.

"Because I'm already plotting on killing you when I get out of here, and if I see you for another second, I might have to kill you right now."

The girl only laughed, not even processing the threat. But the second she felt an invisible force around her neck, her brain shifted, her drunken mind complete deserting the danger. She coughed and choked, her body levitating in the air. Mike had a stern look on his face, his eyebrows furrowed and eyes wild with anger and hurt.

"Mike," she choked, her throat closing in on itself, "please."

He didn't budge, his grip only getting tighter. Elle heard her throat

snap, her body limp and falling to the ground. And then everything went black.

8. Chapter 8

She woke up in the middle of a black infinity, the fiery heats of hell rising up through her naked feet.

“No!” she screamed, her voice echoing in the oblivion. “No!”

This was always the worst part of coming back, re-entering hell. You’re alone, and it’s dark and burning. Everything’s quiet except your shrieks.

“Mike!” she cried desperately, feeling her body begin to turn to ash.

“Mike, help! Mike!”

But she knew he couldn’t save her. And even if he could, he wouldn’t. She’d sacrificed him, and for what? Being able to make sure her family and all of her descendants would never experience hell? There wasn’t anything she could do to keep their destiny from happening, but everything Hopper had done for her argued. Tears pricked her eyes. This is not who her father would’ve wanted her to be. This is not who you’re supposed to be! her instincts screamed at her, but every part of her who wanted her family to be safe fought back. This is for them! Everything you’ve done is for them! You can’t stop now. They have to be safe! And as her eyes burned up into flames, her tears dried.

She woke up on the ground, in the safe place where Mike had snapped her neck. She coughed, her throat snapping back into place as she sat up, eye still red with tears. Standing shakily, she looked at the angels. Lucas was shaking, his hands clenched tightly into fists and his teeth bearing. Dustin sat in the corner of his cage, in the same position he was when Elle had been alive just minutes ago. And Mike had tears rolling down his cheeks, silently suffering.

“Goodbye Mike,” she whispered hoarsely, stumbling away.

“Elle,” he croaked, but she didn’t turn around. He wanted her dead, and she deserved to be dead.

A pain stung her forehead and she joined Max and Will in the depths of the pit. They were laughing, watching as a new soul arrived, his insides being wrapped out. His screams almost outweighed the laughter. It made Elle sick. She slid next to Will, resting her head on his shoulder.

“Damn, what happened to you,” Max cackled, a drip of blood on her cheek. She had been sitting right next to the torture arena, but came over when she saw her sister.

"I died," the girl muttered, inhaling deeply, only sending Max into an eruption of laughter.

"That's hilarious! What happened?"

"Mike snapped my throat..."

Max doubled over, her evil voice echoing. Several of the other demons shot them dirty looks, but they smiled and shook their heads when turning away. Max had that effect on people; she would piss you off time and time again, but her loving and gorgeous nature would draw you back to her.

"It's not funny," Elle said angrily. Who was she kidding? A symbol of love and heaven had killed her. What wasn't funny about that?

"The irony," she gasped, slapping her knee.

"Max," Will said softly but warningly, "enough."

"Sorry Willy. No can do," the redhead said proudly, downing another shot. "I have a bet."

"With who?"

"Randall."

"Huh."

"Don't huh me. Just because I met Lucas doesn't mean I'm off the market. It was a fling to draw me closer to the angels for our mission." Lie reeked her voice. It always had.

"Bullshit," Elle muttered.

"Got something you'd like to say to the crowd?" Max snapped, whipping around.

Numbly, Elle stood. "Bullshit." Max shoved her back, but Elle shoved her sister harder. "It's total bullshit Maxine. You loved him and you knew it. You're just afraid of what's going to happen if you admit what I did."

"That was your mistake, not mine."

"Prove it," Elle spat.

Max charged at her, punching her in the stomach. Elle staggered back a few steps, ran forward until she felt her first grind into Max's jaw just as Max's fingers wrapped around her short hair. A crowd began to form, all laughing and drunk.

"Guys stop!" Will yelled, but they didn't listen.

They ripped one another, punches flying and blood falling from lips and noses.

"You stupid bitch!" Max screamed, her fists up and body twisted in a fighting stance. "He's an angel!"

"So's Lucas!"

“Screw off! You think you’re doing this for him, or for Hopper but you’re not! You’re doing it for yourself!” Elle replies with a punch in Max’s gut and chin. The girl only laughed. “Kill me if it’ll make you feel better, but I’ll just keep coming back. You’re stuck with me.”

“Shut up,” Elle gritted.

“And you’re stuck with Mike slowly rotting and being ripped apart for eternity.”

“Shut up!”

“And you’re stuck with Hopper being disappointed in you for the rest of his existence. Come on Jane, you know that Hopper is disappointed.”

Elle screamed, her voice echoing in the pit. She grabbed a knife from a nearby demon and stabbed it through Max, her body crippling.

“Suck it,” Elle muttered, walking away from Max’s limo body, Will’s jaw still dropped.

“Let’s face it,” Dustin groaned, “we’re toast.”

“No, we’re not,” Mike said optimistically. “Elle will come back for us.”

“No she won’t!” Lucas called. “She’s a demon Mike! Being an asshole is, like, in the terms and conditions.”

“Not true! You’re just upset because you thought Max was a good person when she was actually just a bitch!”

“Piss off, man. Just because Elle turned out to be evil doesn’t mean Max is. Elle is their leader, not Max!”

“And you’re still defending her because you’re too afraid to screw up! Well guess what man? We both fucked up!”

“Yeah, and not by a little bit either...” Dustin muttered.

“Shut up Dustin!”

“What!” Dustin complained, throwing his hands up. “I told you guys from the start that those girls and their brother was bad news, but you two were already too in love!”

“That’s not fair!” Lucas shot. “It’s not fair for me to get any blame! Mike was the one who said we shouldn’t brainwash Elle.”

“You’re right. You protested for brainwashing her, but that doesn’t mean you aren’t in the wrong. I mean, you fell for Max without even getting to know her! I bet you can’t even tell me her real name!”

“Like you know,” Lucas sneered.

"It's Maxine Hopper," Mike said quietly.

"Shut up Mike. Just because Elle told you shit doesn't mean that you're better than me."

"He actually is better..." Dustin muttered, hoping Lucas wouldn't hear. But, inevitably, he did.

"Want to say that to my face?"

"What! At least Mike's being honest and confessing to done goofing! You're literally denying everything I say."

"That's not t-fine. You win."

"Yeah, thanks."

"We're not doing any good burning down here, guys."

"Well, got any plans to bust us out Toothless?"

"Maybe we could fly out?"

"Through the enchanted bars? I'd rather rot down here."

"Okay, well how about we send a message through an intern demon?"

"Like they'd want to help us. They'd probably be burned alive by Satan!"

"I'm pretty sure he prefers Lucifer, but whatever. Um...Mike, got any ideas?"

"We should wait for Elle," he whispered, claspings his hands together.

"She'll come for us."

"Um, Mike? If you haven't noticed, she's the reason we're down here. She's not going to save us," Lucas said, shaking his head. "Get a grip dude."

"She'll come."

"How are you sure?"

"Dustin! Why are you encouraging this fantasy?"

"Because, Lucas, maybe she'll come."

"Oh my god, you're just as dumb..."

"I'm actually not. But I mean, while she was dead she muttered his name. I mean, we all heard it. She obviously still--"

"Don't you dare say the L-word!" Lucas warned.

"What? Love?" Lucas cringed and Dustin gasped. "Is that what you're so afraid of?"

"No..."

"Oh my god! Lucas is afraid to admit he's in love! Holy shit!"

"Shut up!"

"Dude, you are so screwed when I tell everyone!"

"Shut up! And we have to get out of here alive before you can tell

anyone anything.”

“Right! So, any ideas?”

“Elle will come,” Mike whispered. “She’ll come.”

He wasn’t even entirely sure if he was saying this to reassure his friends or himself.

Elle sat curled up in a dark corner. It was hard to find an empty place in hell. People from centuries and centuries before you were even born were there, tormenting and laughing and getting drunk. Almost everywhere was filled with empty bottles and evil laughter, blood being splattered everywhere. Elle felt lucky to even find somewhere where there wasn’t the stench of alcohol tormenting her nose.

Silent tears dripped down from her eyes, dampening her cheeks. Will had never looked at her the way he did moments ago. Jaw dropped, eyes wide in shock, disgust plastered across his face. He didn’t look mad or scared, just disappointed. She had never wanted to make him disappointed in anything or anybody, nevertheless her. Elle had just killed her sister. She knew Max would come back, but Elle knew she would’ve killed Max if there was no way she could be brought back. Will knew too.

Footsteps and meaningless laughter approached her. She flinched, but let her body release when she saw two teenagers with their arms hooked, walking down the hallway with a trail of blood following them. Newbies Elle thought to herself. I’ll bet they’re happy and don’t regret anything. Sniffing, she wiped her face on her sleeve, trying to pull herself together. It wasn’t working too well.

“Hey Ellie,” a timid voice came from a few yards away.

She looked up to find Max. A hole in her shirt revealed a roughly healed scar Elle had just put in her chest. Blood still surrounded the wound. More pale than ever, Max shakily walked towards her. She tucked a hair behind her ear. A sign or nervousness.

“Will helped me clean up.” Elle stood up, cautiously walking over towards the redhead. “He, uh, told me what I said.” A few more steps. Max’s pulse sped up. She awkwardly shifted her weight. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said what I did. I totally deserved that.” Elle was inches from her face. Pulling her into a tight hug, she felt her tears sink into her sister’s shirt.

“Max, I’m so sorry. I—I have no excuse.”

Max wrapped her arms around Elle, consoling her. "No, you did. I pushed you because I knew I deserved it, but I wanted to blame you for Lucas hating me. I'm so sorry Ellie," Max choked, her own tears leaking from her eyes.

"It's okay."

"It's not," Max chuckled, pulling away and wiping her eyes. "I've blamed all of this on you for almost a century because I didn't want to admit that it's partly my fault. I didn't want to admit that I fell in love with an angel. I didn't want to admit that I am an evil bitch and I enjoy ruining things and causing chaos."

"It's what we have to do," Elle shrugged.

"Yeah, but I didn't have to call you Jane." Elle flinched. No one had called her that name since before Russia. "I know. I'm so sorry Ellie."

"It's okay," Elle whispered. But then suddenly it wasn't okay. Memories were flooding back from her early childhood, breaking down the walls she thought she had secured in her mind.

Will and Jane were sitting in the kitchen with their mom, frosting Christmas cookie. Snowflakes fell softly outside of the window, several feet of icy cold snow building outside the framework of the small house, but inside the heat was blasting and Jane could feel her toes tingling inside her socks.

"Mama," little Jane said, her front tooth still missing. "When will baby Mike be here?"

Terry laughed, rubbing the bump that her stomach had become. "In a few months. I still don't know why you want to name him Michael."

"Mommy, one day I'm going to meet someone named Mike and we're going to best friends forever. We're going to get married and eat sugar cookies for every meal," Jane giggled, spooning a huge glob of blue, homemade frosting from the bowl.

"Yeah, and I'm going to see if he has a brother and we're going to get married!" Will chimed, looking up from his cookie. It had a thin layer of frosting on it, and pressed into the frosting was a perfect alignment of sugar sprinkles. Even as a little boy, he was beautifully artistic.

"You will?" Terry smiled, licking a small amount of frosting off of her sticky fingers.

"Yes. Boys are better than girls. They want to read comic books with you and play with cars."

"I like cars!"

"Yeah, but most girls don't and I can't marry my sister."

"Oh," Elle pondered. "I guess that's true." Returning back to her

frosting, little Jane still pondered.

"What is it Janie?" Will said, licking his spoon covered in white frosting.

"What if I don't meet Mike? How will I marry?" Tears started to fall from her eyes.

"Oh baby," Terry cooed, wiping the tears from her daughters face dry and then kissed her forehead, "I promise you that you'll meet Mike. Maybe not in this life, but maybe in another."

Staggering back, Elle fell down to the ground, her entire world collapsing. This was her destiny from day one. Her destiny was to be kidnapped and tortured. Her destiny was to be saved and loved until all that was taken away. Her destiny was to sell her soul and regret that for the rest of her life. Everything was supposed to be this way; in ruin.

"Ellie?" Max asked worriedly, bending down to grasp her sisters hand. "Are you okay? Elle?"

"One day I'll meet Mike and I'll be the happiest girl in the planet!"

"When will you meet him?"

"After the war. After we're out of Russia."

"Will! Will! Ellie's in trouble! Help!"

"Why are you still awake kiddo?"

"Oh, hey dad. I'm waiting."

"For what?"

"For Mike."

"Elle? Are you okay? Elle, talk to me! Elle, its Will! Are you okay?"

"I'm sorry miss, but you can't see them right now."

"That's my dad! No! Dad! Dad! No!"

"Jane! Janie, are you okay?"

"Hey dad. It's me. I'm so sorry. You shouldn't be here. I'll get you out of here, I promise. You'll live. And one day when Mike comes down to finally save our asses, we'll all live happily ever after. But you have to wake up. Please. I can't do this without you."

"What happened?"

"I don't know! I told her I shouldn't have called Jane and she said it was fine and then she just went blank."

"Oh shit. The wall broke."

"The wall?"

"Kid?"

"Dad! Oh my god Dad. I missed you so much! Will! Willy! Dad's okay! Mom and Dad and Jonathan are okay!"

“Elle, snap out of it! It’s not real!”

“Wait, what isn’t real. Will, what the hell is going in?”

“After the war, Elle need to learn to keep her painful memories away from her. She learned to build a wall that just fucking shattered. Everything that’s every happened to her is flooding back.”

“Oh shit.”

“Why the hell would you do that!”

“Dad...”

“No Will! I don’t give a flying shit about me. You sold your souls to save us?”

“It was the only option!”

“No, Max, it absolutely was not the only option!”

“So this is it? I’m just going to lose you? Now? After everything that’s happened your never coming home?”

“That’s the plan...”

“That’s not a plan William! And even if it was, its a shit plan!”

“We needed you alive...”

“Elle, honey, I never would’ve wanted this for you.”

“Well it’s not your choice.”

“Do I get to say goodbye?”

“No.”

“What?”

“It’s already midnight. It’s too late.”

Elle sat up, sucking in as much oxygen that could fill her lungs. Gasping, she let her tears fall loose, sobbing into her hands.

“It’s been my destiny since day one. To ruin everything.”

9. Chapter 9

Mike felt helpless. And he was. He was sitting in a cage in the dark depths of hell waiting for his doom to come to him. He deserved doom. He had killed her, and she did nothing but scream for him. Mike felt his blood curdle as the screamed echoed in his ears. His whole body felt lifeless as his head span at top speeds. Thoughts and memories flooded his mind, and he felt like he was being buried alive, again.

The streets were filled with people, walking up and down the streets in togas. The late August humidity strained the crowds, slowing their already sluggish pace as they wandered between street vendors. Cheese was sweating and the olive oil grew restless. Customers distracted vendors while the tall, skinny, curly-haired boy wandered. He didn't have enough money for delicacies, but generosity was his gift from the Gods.

"Mike!" Clio called, her brown curls flying over her shoulders as she caught him from the corner of her eye. She waved him over.

"Hello Clio," he smiled, hugging the shirt girl. Clio had been his friend for years, and she always spoiled him.

Unraveling a cloth, she smiled, showing him the goodies she had bought for him. "I know you said not to buy you anything..."

Mike gasped. Wrapped inside was honey, cheese, Mastiha, and saffron. "Clio," he scolded, "you should've have."

"I know," she giggled, "but I couldn't help myself! Besides, my father gave me extra this time."

"No..." Mike grinned, leaning in his elbows as she turned into her cart, knocking a jug over. A thundering sound erupted, the ground quaking. "Good job, Clio," he laughed. However, his friend turned around, a panicked look on her face. "Hey, what's wrong?"

"That wasn't me..." Together, they turned as they watched their futures crumble in front of them.

Vesuvius was gushing ash as the top blew to the ground, the sky bleeding from a light blue into an inky black. The sun disappeared behind the cloud of debris, rocks speeding towards the earth like shooting stars. Molten rock dripped from the entrance of the volcano like honey pouring from the tip of a jar. It sluggishly rolled down the side of the mountain, reaching the olive orchards and burning them to cinders. Screams filled the ashy air, coughs more so than others. A

thin layer of debris layer across the ground. Air as thick as fog settled with rock, Mike looked for Clio.

"Clio!" he screamed, shoving people aside. More ash settled. It thickened every second, piling up to more than a few feet. Wading through the grey debris like they were waves in the Mediterranean Sea, Mike looked for her. "Clio! Clio!" People were buried, their bodies stuck as the lava reached the streets of the buried Pompeii. "Clio!" He felt as his legs gave out under him, his knees buckling and his upper body swan diving into the ashy flakes. Mike felt as the crumbled rock filled his lungs at the same time that the molten rock reached his bad toes. He let out a scream as it ate at his flesh.

"Please," he choked. Closing his eyes and trying to focus on anything other than his own suffocation and burning flesh, Mike began to pray:

"Dear Lord, please protect my sister and father. I know they have done me wrong, but everyone deserves to be forgiven. I pray that you preserve Clio's soul, for she is a beautiful person. She protects those who can and cannot protect themselves. And dear lord, please take home all of those who are here, being buried alive. They are all your children. I pray to thee that they be saved because they are more worthy."

Mike could feel his skin grow hot, the phantom pains still eating at his flesh. Shivering, trying to freeze away the feelings, he tucked his wings around himself.

"Why am I here?" Mike whispered, anger eating at his insides. "Why am I here!" he screamed, tears flooding from his face. "Why am I here! I have proven myself nothing but loyal! I have done everything you've asked and this is my repayment! Does my loyalty mean nothing to you? You have failed me and I am still here praying that you will save me! You told me you saved me from my burning carcass because I was selfless!"

Mike raggedly breathed, running his hands through his hair. "I'm losing faith, Father."

The three sat in the corner, embracing one another. None of them wanted to be the first to let go, but Elle eventually pulled away, wiping her eyes and taking a deep, shaky breath.

"Now what?" Will asked, holding Elle's hand tightly.

"We stick together," Max said softly, taking Wills empty hand in her own, and cautiously grabbing Elle's. "There isn't another option. We let something come between us once, and that ended poorly."

"Together," Elle said weakly.

The other two nodded, but still sensed her unsettledness.

"Ellie," Max gently urged, "what's wrong."

"Nothing," the girl smiled, her obviousness utterly unconvincing.

"E," Will smirked, trying to bring a smile to her face, "you haven't been able to lie since you punched Jacob S. in the face for stealing your cookie at lunch in fifth grade."

His attempt worked, giggles erupting from her closed mouth. "I had completely forgotten about that."

"I mean, he was such a jerk! He was so mean to everyone except you and you didn't want any of it. So he playfully took your cookie and you lost it!"

"Elle, oh my god!" Max snorted, slapping her knee. "That is so complete hilarious oh my god!"

"She was so stern, too," Will chuckled, shaking his head. "He kept apologizing for taking her cookie and she was so pissed. It was so good!"

"No one take her goddamned cookie!" Max snorted, tears of laughter leaking from her eyes. "Holy shit, I need that laugh!" Elle smiled a little, but eventually frowned.

A knock broke Elle from her homework.

"Come in," she called, turning back to her equations.

"Hey kid," Hopper smiled, coming in and quietly shutting the door behind him, "whatcha working on?"

"Math," Elle shrugged, putting down her pencil to look at her dad.

"I would offer help but I don't know how to do those damn things."

"It's okay Dad," she laughed, "I think I've got the gist of these things."

"Good," he chuckled, "cause your mother and I have no clue. Jonathan brought those home when he was about your age, and we both were clueless."

"How is he, by the way?"

"He's okay. NYU isn't killing him yet."

"Yet," Elle laughed.

"Yeah," the old chief chortled, shaking his head. "I'm expecting it to come along. I love that kid, but sometimes he scares me."

"I'll bet Grandmama would be really mad if he flunked out."

"Well, I don't think he'll flunk, kid. I think he'll get distracted by his pictures to continue with his studies."

"I thought he was majoring in photography."

"Your mother and I decided it would be best if he didn't," the man sighed, grasping her hand.

"Dad?"

"Yeah?"

"This is kinda random..."

"You kids specialize in random."

"Haha, very funny. Well, anyways, do you believe in...in soulmates?"

"Soulmates?"

"Yeah. Like someone your destined to be with?"

"Do you mean like that fantasy romantic bullshit?"

"What?"

"Ellie," Hopped said sternly, "I'm going to tell you the damned truth: soulmates aren't real. I mean, they are, but not in that fairytale way. Everyone has someone they're destined to meet, someone who makes them laugh and smile and cry and regret. This person is the you're meant to find. It's your destiny. When you find them, you'll know."

"But when, Dad?" Elle whined, throwing her hands up. "When am I supposed to find the one person who will complete me? When will I find him? When will I find Mike!"

"Oh Ellie, it could be tomorrow or in a week or in twenty years. Don't waste your life looking for Mike. He's like fawn; he'll come out when he wants to be found, and you'll never want to let go if his beauty. But he'll startle easily and if given the chance, flee to safety. Never let him go. A fawn's beauty is rare and delicate, a treasure. You two will find one another. And when you do find one another, it'll be the happiest day of my life."

Her father's words rang in her ears. Mike had found her, and she sure as hell wasn't letting him go. Quietly, she asked, "Would it be a dumb idea to try to break Mike, Lucas, and Dustin from hell?"

They looked at her like she had angel wings springing from her back.

"What the hell are you thinking!" Will yelled at the same time Max screamed "Are you out of your mind!"

"So it's a dumb idea..."

"Yes!" the two exclaimed.

"Elle, do you want to get killed?" Will reprimanded.

"And do you what to get them killed?" Max added on.

"No...I'm just trying to find a solution."

"How!" Will questioned, standing up and pacing back and forth.

"There is no way we'll even make it past the cages!"

"It's a suicide mission!" Max chimed in, nodding her head as she folded her arms over her chest.

"So....are you in?"

"Well duh!" Max scoffed, rolling her eyes. "What kind of dumb ass question is that?"

"In it to win it baby!" Will winked.

A smile broke onto Elle's face and the fizz of hopefulness began to rise up in her.

Will hadn't slept in a week. Between trying to help both of his sisters, Elle trying to free Mike and Max trying to free Lucas, he needed to take a break to do something for himself. Silently slipping out from their room, he walked through the eerily quiet floors of hell, an almost empty bottle of alcohol in hand. Probably a torment session in the lower pits Will thought to himself as he wandered on.

This place had been his home for decades, and he was sorry to say that he would miss it when they escaped. Will figured that maybe this would change when he resurfaced into the real world, but right now he was nostalgic. He would miss the torment fights. Well, not the actual tormenting. He would miss the way his friends and sisters would get drunk with him, their endless laughter echoing. He would miss the way he could freely wander, seeing everywhere with the simple thought. And he would miss the boy he was going to see.

He felt his weight shift as he walked, staggering and running into a wall. He wasn't actually drunk, per say. He was drunk on memories. Everything seemed to hit him. Tomorrow, he was leaving this place and never coming back. He was going to be an outcast. A traitor. But for one more night, he just wanted to be Will. Goofy William Hopper who never runs away from a challenge. Loving William Hopper who defends and cares for those he loves. Artistic William Hopped who carves murals and stories as old as time into the walls of hell. He wanted to just be William Hopper for one more night.

As he approached the door, he felt himself pull back. What if he doesn't want to see you? What if he still hates you for leaving? Panic hit Will, but he knew that if Anthony ever loves him in the first place, he would forgive Will. But his palms were still sweaty, and Will

found himself running his hands down his shirt. Shaky breaths exhaled from his mouth and chills ran down his back. Coldly, he felt himself knock softly on the door.

It opened and there he was. His blond hair was messy, but his icy blue eyes were sharp. His tan skin stood out in his white shorts, and Will take his eyes off of the boy's bare chest. The scar from his entrance into hell still stood, the three knife marks faded.

"Hi," Will whispered.

"Why are you," Anthony sighed.

"Can I please just talk to you?"

"Fine," He exhaled sharply, opening the door wider for the taller boy to come in.

"Thank you," Will gently smiled.

The room looked the same as it had when Will had left: the unmade bed next to a stand with various sketchbooks and charcoal pencils. A small vase consisting of one flower stood on top of the books.

"Still drawing?"

"Why wouldn't I?" Anthony bitterly responded, arms crossed.

"I'm sorry. I was just trying to—"

"What? What were you trying to do, Will? Make it harder to move on?" Anthony cried, throwing his hands into his hair. "Why are you here? Why are you making this so hard? You left! You left, remember? I asked if I was more important than a stupid mission and you said no! You said no, Will, and that fucking killed me!" Will watched with tears streaming down his cheeks as he watched Anthony cry. "Tony, no..."

"You left! You didn't care!" Will walked closer to him and Anthony stood still. He didn't want to move. He craved for his boyfriend. "You just left! Like I wasn't worth it! Goddammit! I just wanted to be worth it, Will."

Will put his hands on Tony's face, caressing it in his palms. Gently, he ran his thumbs down his cheeks, collecting the tears, and then down his lips. "Tony..."

"What..."

"Of course you're worth it," Will murmured, bring his boyfriends lips to his own. The unsaid forgiveness seemed to melt into Will as he pushed the smaller boy back towards the wall, locking him against his body. Will pressed his lips onto his loves neck, leaving small bruises up and down the strip of skin. A coolness rushed over him as Anthony put his hands under Will's shirts, intertwining his fingers

through his belt loops to bring the artist closer while his hands ran over Will's chest.

Laughing, he peeled his shirt from his skin, exposing his own scars and flesh. Hungry, Anthony turned Will against the wall, pressed his mouth to his scars. Will tipped his head back as the other boy made his way from his chest to his neck, his teeth pulling at the skin.

"Holy shit," he moaned, picking the lighter boy off the ground. He pressed the boy against the wall, their mouths nipping at one another's.

Clumsily, Will carried him over to the bed. Anthony flirtily laid down on the bed. The older boy loomed over him, lowering himself slowly. Anthony bit his lip impatiently. Will smirked, suddenly stopping.

Looking around, he commented, "Dang Tony, your room is super clean. I wish my sisters could keep our room this clean..."

"Shut up and come here," the other boy responded, annoyance lingering in his voice as he wrapped his arms and legs around Will, bringing him down.

"Pity..." Will murmured before Anthony rejoined their lips.

10. Chapter 10

They met at midnight, the three demons crowding together in the corner of a noisy bar. Will's shirt was on backwards, and his shoes were untied.

"Screw off," he hissed as Max raised eyebrows in question.

"Come on guys, we have stuff to do," Elle complained, slapping Max on the side of the head. "No one is making fun of anyone."

"Get much sleep?" Max asked teasingly.

Will responded with a punch to her stomach.

"Guys!" Elle growled.

"Sorry," they chimed, still slapping one another behind their sisters back.

Elle lead the way, walking unsuspectingly through the corridors, winding her way past groups of demons and crowded bars. Max and Will did their best to follow her sneakiness, but their arguments echoed softly in the pit. Their snickers stopped quickly after a warning look from Elle, her eyes filled with annoyance and fire. Signaling them with a wave, she snuck up behind one of the demons who had access to the cages, slipping the keys from his belt while he snores, alcohols still lingering in his breath.

The three carefully walked around the main entrances, trying their best to avoid suspicion. They were undetected, winding down hidden staircases. If they were caught, their fate would be much worse than the angels rotting in their cells. Every breath Elle took, she felt her heart beat faster and faster. Max's face was pale, and Will's breathing was ragged. She could sense their fear.

Looking around the corner, spying on the gatekeepers, she nodded to her two siblings, pointing her finger towards the left. Max barely moved her head in agreement, grabbing Will's hand and leading him that way while Elle distracted the guards. Cautiously, Elle walked into the room, her head held up high, mocking courage. The two men glared, stepping forwards.

"I need to see the angels," she said strongly, her performance not wavering.

"Says who," the broader one scoffed, planting his feet firmly in an attempt to intimidate her.

"Says me. I'm the one who went to that shit place and brought them back, so I think I should at least the dignity to bring them out."

"Bring them out?" the shorter one asked, cocking an eyebrow.

"By order of Lucifer."

"The big man? Are you sure?" the first one asked. "I don't think so. He would've told us."

"I mean, if you'd like to bring it up with him, be my guest. He's already pissed that you two are slacking off so much."

"Slacking off!" Offenses lingered in the short one's tone. "How dare he?"

"Well I mean, he's not wrong..."

"Excuse me!"

"I would turn around right about now," Elle smirked evilly as Max and Will plunged their knives into the demons, spells laced in. Blood spilled onto the ground as the empty carcasses fell to the ground.

"Thank god you two didn't pull out a normal knife," Elle breathed, wiping a drop of blood from her cheek. "Cause if those two were coming back, they would be pissed."

"Let's go," Will breathed, grabbing at his sisters.

The three took off, leaving the demons bodies on the ground. They turned the corner to where the cages were.

"Remind me why they're now here?" Max asked, huffing.

"Mike killed Elle, so they had to move them into a more protected prison," Will softly said, looking around for the boys. "There!" he yelled, pointing to three cages. They were beside the lava stream. Lucifer was probably ready to push his angel toys to their fiery deaths.

Gulping, Elle ran up to the cages. Lucas sat up immediately, a shocked smile upon his lips, elbowing Dustin through his bars. The snoring boy shot up, grinning as soon as he saw the three. Max gave Lucas a timid grin, walking towards the cage. He got to his feet, approaching her.

"Hi..."

"Hey..."

"I'm...I'm really sorry," she whispered, a tear slipping down her cheek. His hands came through the bars, wiping it away.

"Hey...it's okay. You didn't have a choice."

She sniffed, taking his hand. Will unlocked the door, opening the cell to let Dustin and Lucas out. Lucas cupped Max's face with his palms, kissing her gently. She wrapped her arms around his waist, bringing herself closer to him.

"Let's find Mike," Elle said, smiling at the two. "We still have to save

him.”

Will and Dustin nodded, nudging Max and Lucas. Together, the five sprinted towards the last cage, Elle taking the key from her twin.

Mike sat in the corner of his cage, his fingers tracing the bars. One death by molten rock was enough for him, but a second... He still couldn't believe that he was here again, his future being destroyed by the inevitable. And he was alone. Again. Clio's screams still echoed, followed by Elle's. Elle. Oh, how he longed to touch her, to feel her mouth melt into his, go feel her fingers knotted in his hair.

But he wanted her dead. He wanted her dead for kidnapping him, tricking him, pretending to love him. It hit like a bullet. She never loved him. It was all just an act. Nothing she said was real. Her kindness was fiction. Why had she done this to him? He saved her siblings, saved her! He had done everything she would have wanted, and yet, he was here. In a cage. In the pits of hell. He should be treated like a hero. Mike's faith wavered, crossing the line between being real and being fake. There was no God to save him now.

“Mike!” A voice called from far away, echoing towards him

“Elle?” Why would she be here? Why would she come back?

“Mike!” Lucas bellowed

“Mike!” Dustin called. “Come on man! I'll give you chocolate pudding!”

“Mike!” Elle yelled again, her voice delicate but desperate.

“Elle!” Mike screamed in response. “Elle!”

“Mike!”

He watched as his friends heads rise as they ran up the hilly path. Elle was in the front, a smile beginning to break on her face as she sprinted towards him. Stumbling to a halt, she slid the key in swiftly into the lock and ripped open the door. She jumped into Mike's arms, wrapping her arms around his neck and burying her head into his shoulder. His wings embraced her, her tears staining his feathers.

“Mike,” she mumbled, laughing shortly.

“Elle,” he whispered, lightly kissing the side of her neck. “Hey.”

She let go of his neck, but he kept his wings secure around her.

“Is this a devil's snare?” she teased.

“The hell it is,” he mumbled.

Elle smiled, putting her arms around his neck once again, bringing

her lips to his. She felt everything melt away as she kissed him. Their mouths moved together, Mike eventually deepening the kiss. Her fingers slid under his shirt, her cool touch matching exactly what he had been longing for. His hands grabbed her hips, pulling her in so close she could smell hell's ashes embedded into his shirt.

"Um, guys? We gotta go. Like, now," Will commented. Lucas nodded, an arm around Max's waist.

Mike and Elle parted, happiness aching in their bones. Hand in hand, they ran from the cage, the key still stuck in the lock. Cautiously, the sextet made their way past the many empty cages, bones still sitting in the positions where their owners perished. Dustin gulped, taking Will's hand and squeezing it tightly. Max held Lucas's arm, standing so close to him they almost stumbled over one another's feet. Elle held Mike's hand, but stood in the front of the group, leading them. She signaled them, waving her hand.

They rounded a corner to only run straight into a group of demons, waiting for them with the knives Max and Will had used in hand. Will stepped in front of them all, fists up.

"You'll have to go through me first," he growled, using the flick of his head to send three of them flying backwards, but he was grabbed by two that came from the wings.

"Will!" Elle screamed, letting go of Mike's hand to go get her brother, but she was grabbed by Max, who had let Lucas go.

The demons who had been thrown on the wall were up and grabbing Dustin, Mike, and Lucas. They were shoved into one another, their noses bearing blood as the two holding Will down joined their brothers.

They were held in the palm of Satan, their wings fluttering helplessly. Mike, Lucas, and Dustin were chained together by their ankles and wrists, sitting cowardly next to the throne of the king of hell. Circulation was cut off from their limbs, which were now turning white. Blood dropped from their noses, ears, and foreheads. Elle, Max, and Will were worse.

The siblings were on their knees, blood gushing from their sides from where knives were dug into their guts. Will was unconscious next to Max, who held his hand as tightly as she could. Max was looking around frantically; anxiety and stress were eating at her like gnats

eating at a dead body. Elle kept her eyes to the ground.

This is all my fault, she thought. Everyone I love is going to die because of me. I ruined things. Again.

Tears dropped from her eyes, mixing with the blood that stained her face. The pain has dulled to a point where it hardly matched the hurt inside of her head. Why couldn't she do anything right? All she wanted was to be able to do something good for a change instead of leaving a wake of destruction behind her. Was that too much to ask? She thought back to the night where she betrayed Mike. How could he not have known something was wrong? God, he was so stupid-in-love. She had isolated him and then suddenly opened up. How had that not been a red flag? Why had that night happened? If he had just realized, she wouldn't have fallen for him. No, that's not true. She fell for him long before that night. Flashbacks wrapped around her head like a ribbon.

"Mike, slow down."

Mike was running around the grassy field, his feet pressing into the soft earth and rebounding, sending him flying up as his wings caught the late evening air. A soft pink filled the air as the cotton candy clouds follow the bright sun behind the hill, allowing the moon to rise to rule the night. That's how she and Mike were; night and day.

Everyone loves daytime. You awake to the bright sun welcoming you, warming your face. You frolic in its light, spending your days enjoying the little time you have left. Everyone hates the night. You sleep through it, ignoring the stars, moon, and planets. No one likes the cold bitter air that nips at your ears. But the day loves the night. Without it, the day doesn't thrive.

Mike grabbed her hands, spinning her around. She laughs, embracing the love she's missed. She's missed feeling like something other than a mistake. After decades, Elle still hasn't learned to forgive herself. It's hard, forgiving yourself for hurting someone that thought the world of you. Mike thinks the world of her, and she knows. Maybe that's why it'll be so easy to defy him.

"I think you don't want to have fun," Mike laughs, collapsing towards the ground, breaths heaving in his chest.

"You're right," she says breathlessly.

They're laying in the middle of the field, side by side. His hip moves over and touches hers. She can hear him gasp, but he doesn't move away. Elle wishes he would. He doesn't know that his touch makes one thousand butterflies flutter in her stomach. She knows that

falling in love wasn't part of the plan, but it's hard.

It's hard not to fall for someone you know will care for you for all of your infinity.

Hiccups build up in her throat and won't go away no matter how hard she tried to swallow them. Elle wished that she could start over. Of course, she would still sell her soul to save her father, but she wouldn't bring Max and Will into it. One parent and a sibling is enough. Elle wished she had known that it doesn't matter if you can't save anyone, but if you can save one person, it'll make the biggest difference in the world.

"Ah, my favorite traitors."

Elle lifted her eyes to see Lucifer strut in, his evil, bitter grin the equivalent of a shark's. He sits in his throne, kicking Will's lifeless body as he passes. Elle feels every muscle in her body tighten, wishing that she could protect her brother. She wouldn't have to protect him if she hadn't dragged him into this just minutes ago.

"How are we all doing," he draws, licking his lips. "Everyone comfortable? Fabulous."

"What do you want?" Elle growls, her teeth clenched tight.

"What do I want?" Lucifer laughs, flicking his hand. As he does, Elle levitates in the air, an invisible force grasping and pulling her upwards by her neck. Her breathing becomes shaky, but she does all she can not to struggle. Struggling is a sign of weakness, and if there's anything Satan hates more than a traitor, it's weakness. "I want to know why betrayed me for these stupid angels. I mean! they are the enemies, not me. I saved your family Ellie. Don't you forget that."

Everyone bone in her body screamed at her, telling her to just let herself die, but her mind protest against it. She had to do this for her dad. For Papa. For the mother she never knew. For Will and Max, the siblings she adored. For her friends, Lucas and Dustin. And for Mike. She couldn't give in, but she felt her lungs start to close in as her heartbeat sped to inhumanly speeds. She clenched her eyes, the veins in her neck bulging.

"Ellie," she heard a voice whisper.

She opened her eyes, finding herself in a vast open. She was laying down on the ground, which was covered in a thin layer of water. This new infinity was black; no start and no end. She stood up in the shallow water, unaware of what was lurking underneath her feet.

"Hey kid," the voice said. "Come over here."

She turned around to see him, her father. Jim Hopper stood there, his

figure the same it was when she left him on the pathetic earth so many years ago.

"Dad," she whimpered, running to him. She jumped in his arms, hugging him and her sobs became louder. She felt his forearm wrap around her, holding her close.

"You found him kid," he whispered, kissing the side of her head, "you found Mike."

"Yeah."

He set her down, wiping his eyes. She laughed, mostly out of shock and happiness. He was here. Her dad was standing across from her, and it made her so unbelievably happy. Elle had missed him so much.

"Dad, I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"For what I did. I hurt you and mom and Jonathan."

"Oh kid..."

"No. I'm sorry. I feel like I'm hurting everyone I love..."

He hugged her, kissing the top of her head. "I know kid. I'm sorry about Mike."

"Are they going to die because of me?" she whispered, tears slipping from her eyes. Closing her eyes, Elle pressed her face into his shirt, taking in his scent.

"No kid. They're not."

"Why did I drag them into this?"

"Because you've got a big heart. And that big heart is gonna save them. Right along with that big brain?"

"How?"

"Because you already know what to do."

Elle opened her eyes. She was no longer in the Void. She was still dangling by her neck in front of Satan's eagle eye.

"Dad?" she whispered. "Dad?"

Tears slipped down her cheeks when it came to her. He was right. She knew what had to do.

"Lucifer?" Elle coughed.

"What can I do for you my dear?" his unpleasant voice came, happiness stenchung it.

"I'm sorry."

Everything built up in her as she began to scream. The fires in hell extinguished as an unknown force exploded from her body. His invisible force was broken as she rise up, light and energy radiating from her body. Blood dripped from her ears and nose rolling down

her face. A blinding light took over the depths of hell.

11. Chapter 11

The frosty Wisconsin air bit at their noses as the hooded figures hustled into the radiating coffee shop. Snow piles up on the sidewalks as the early December flakes drifted swiftly down towards the icy world. As the door opened, the small building enveloped them in warmth. The one in the blue snow coat smiled up at their love, taking their hand. Together, the group moved forward.

They had gone through everything together. One year ago, the one in the blue coat went to ruin their love's life, bringing their friends down with them. The four surrounded the two love birds, the two of different backgrounds smiling at one another. They had learned to accept that unexpected. What was unexpected was the love that bloomed from the chaos. The world had been flipped upside-down, but they found a way to stay together. Oh, how oblivious they were to what was going on underneath the earth's crust. And even if they did know, they wouldn't go back to the way their lives used to be. Never again.

"Hey," the barista smiled sweetly, acknowledging the group of six, "what can I get y'all on this cold day?"

Elle smiled at Will and Max, Lucas joined at Max's hip with Dustin resting his chin on Will's shoulder, grasping Mike's hand tighter. "Can we get six coffees? It's been a hell of a year."

Notes for the Chapter:

I just wanted to say thank you for all the support and love. You guys have been so awesome with all of the kudos and comments. I'm so excited to write more and I hope you'll come back. Love you guys